



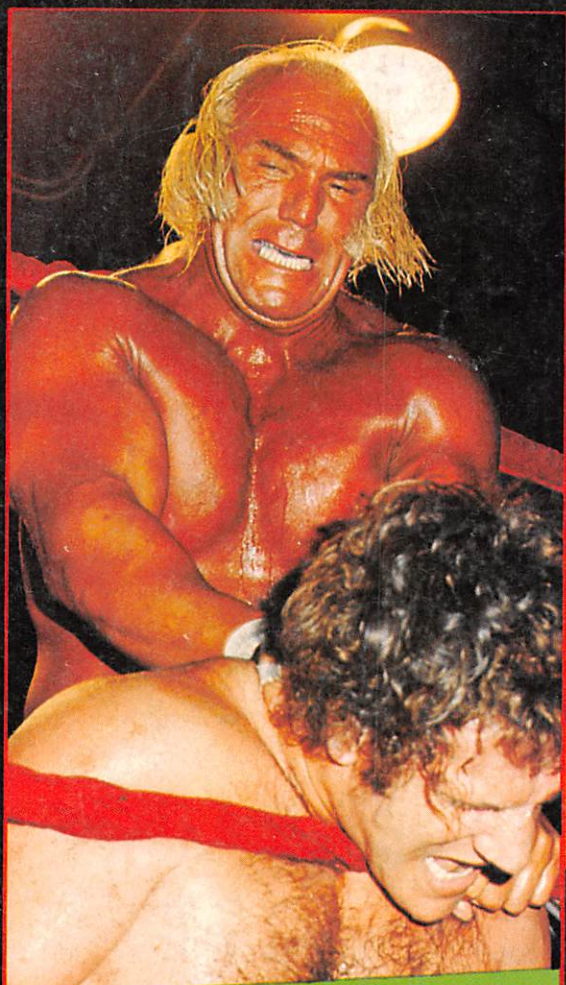
Inside

**THE MAN WHO WAS HIRED
TO DESTROY MIL MASCARAS**

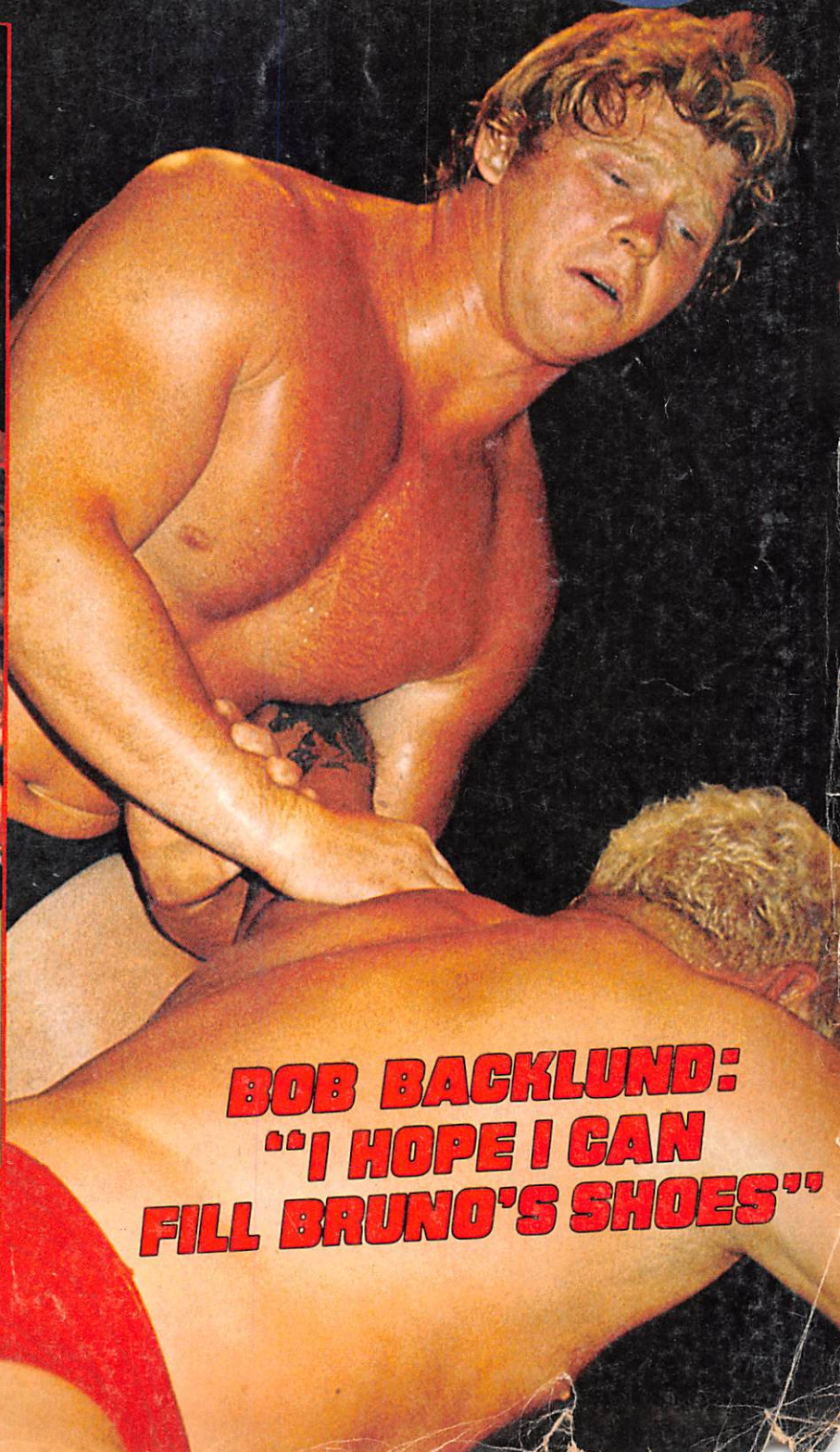
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Wrestling



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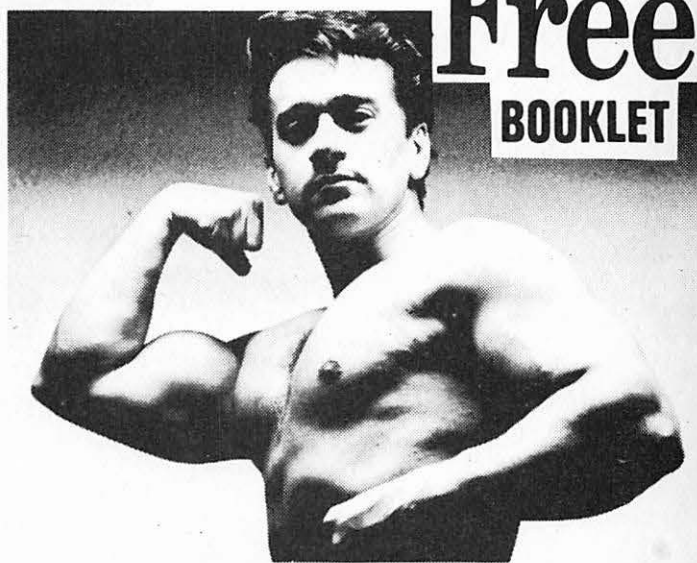
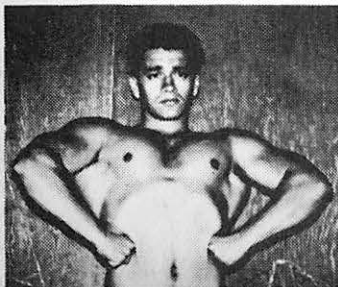
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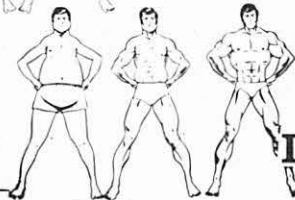
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Art Staff

THEO EHRET
TONY LANZA
BOB SABRE
Photographers

COVER PHOTOS BY
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

14 RANDOM THOUGHTS

1. Superstar Graham's first few title defenses have shown him to be merciless, cruel, and a disgrace to the title.
2. Dusty Rhodes continues to be the most popular wrestler in the NWA territory--and deservedly so.
3. Don't be fooled by his vicious tactics...Ken Patera is one helluva wrestler. I wish he'd get smart and become a good guy again.
4. I hope some tag team cripples Professor Tanaka and Mr. Fuji so neither rulebreaker is able to wrestle again.
5. There is no place in professional sports for a man like Baron Von Raschke. He should be banned immediately!
6. With or without a title belt, Bruno Sammartino is a true champion.
7. Terry Funk has not yet proven to me he is as good a wrestler now as he was before he lost the belt to Harley Race.
8. Mil Mascaras is so good-looking without his mask he makes "Handsome" Jim Valiant look like a pile of used chicken parts.
9. Bob Backlund is already among the top five best wrestlers in the world today. He is certainly a future champion.
10. I may be wrong, but I believe if Baba the Giant ever wrestled Andre the Giant, Baba would be a clear-cut victor.
11. George "The Animal" Steele just ended the career of veteran Big Bob Schure. If you ask me, Steele is the pits!
12. Wouldn't a tag team combination of Chief Jay Strongbow and Ivan Putski be the greatest ever!
13. Greg Gagne is ready to take Nick Bockwinkle's AWA belt.
14. Stan Stasiak had better find a new maneuver. Everyone in the WWWF has learned how to block his once-dreaded heartpunch.

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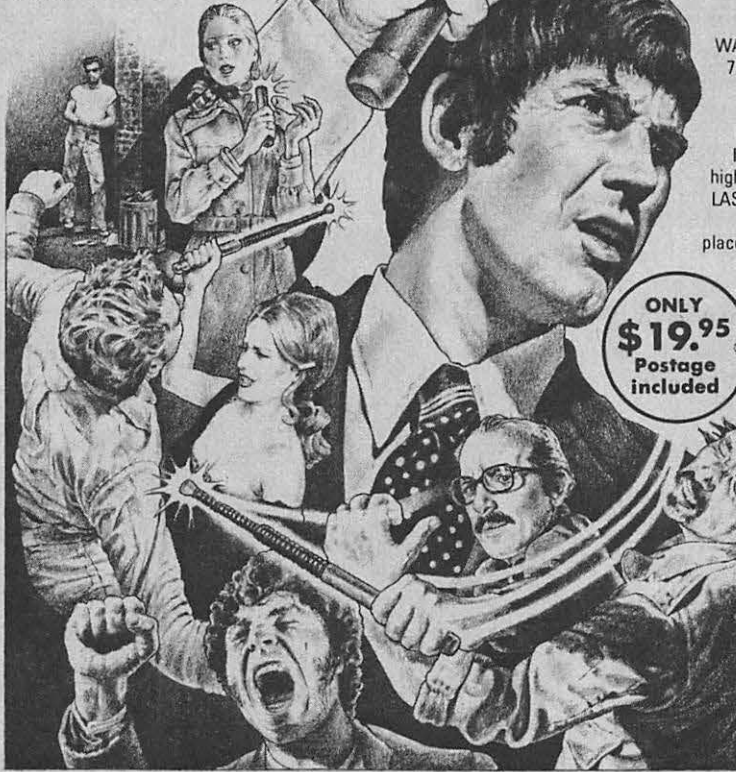
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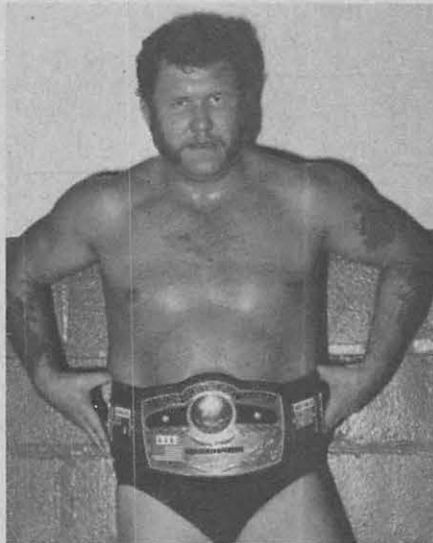
Superstar Billy Graham has taken control of the WWWF championship.

WILL YOU LOOK at the rough beasts who own the three major titles. WWWF champion: rulebreaker Superstar Billy Graham. NWA champion: rulebreaker Harley Race. AWA champion: rulebreaker Nick Bockwinkel, under the management of genius Bobby Heenan. What can we learn from this? If you have the average intelligence of a wrestling fan, probably nothing.

If you've read this far though—without straining the muscles in your lips—chances are you'll be able to learn something. The lesson is obvious: so-called rulebreakers are better than the scientific clods. It's been clear for years. Now the evidence is there for everyone to see.

Before going further, congratulations are in order to Superstar Billy Graham. The new WWWF king has erased the last blemish from the championship picture. Bruno Sammartino has fallen to Graham's superior skills. Wrestling fans will

now be spared the sight of this clumsy fool flopping around the canvas like an epileptic whale. Of course, Sammartino broke the rules more often than anyone, but he lacked the guts to admit it. Best of all, Graham has spared us ever having to hear again Sammartino's hypocritic sniveling about being true and righteous. Best of luck to Billy Graham, champion. It's a pity his greatness will be exhibited before fans too stupid to appreciate him.



Harley Race rides herd over the NWA. He is another self-proclaimed rulebreaker in a championship position.

Getting back to the point, it is clear rulebreaking leads to success. Of course, what I mean by rule-breaking is the desire to win at any cost. All wrestlers break the rules. The men the fans hate, the "rule-breakers," do it with dignity. The fan favorites, the "scientific wrestlers," break the rules, but they do it badly. To cover their



Nick Bockwinkel has total control of the AWA as that association's champion. He has owned the belt for nearly two years.

incompetence, they claim to break the rules only when goaded by their unscrupulous opponents. That nonsense wouldn't fool a horsefly, which explains why the majority of wrestling fans believe it implicitly.

It's a great era in wrestling for the few intelligent fans who can appreciate the sport at its ruthless best. We now have champions outside the control of promoters and commissions. Those who view the sport as the last bastion of independence must revel in these champions who listen only to their own commands. No longer will titleholders disgrace themselves by blowing to the whims of promoters and commissioners.

Success breeds imitation, so we can rejoice in the knowledge rule-breaking will become the fashion. Scientific wrestlers with the least ambition will start to expand their repertoires, learning how to do maneuvers correctly for a pleasant change. New grapplers will no longer waste their careers being imitations of Bruno Sammartino, Verne Gagne, or Jack Brisco. The

(Continued on page 52)



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K EY WEST, FLORIDA—Many people thought I was crazy for wanting to interview Ox Baker. "He's mad, you know," they said. "This is the worst idea you've had since you tried to interview The Sheik. That time, you got burned. There's no telling what can happen when Ox Baker gets his hands on you. Stay away!" I didn't listen to them.

Obviously, Ox didn't kill me. After all, I'm still here. I was able to write this column. Nor did he yell, scream, rant, rave, or act insane. Indeed, we had a very interesting interview, one of the best I've had with any wrestler in a long time.

If a man is a rulebreaker, that's his business. I don't care. I only interview the man. And that is how I approached Ox Baker.

I thought it would be better to talk away from any wrestling arena, so I selected this famous vacation spot for our interview. Ox seemed more relaxed and willing to talk. He had a lot to say.

"There was a time," he told me as we sipped our drinks, "when I did not try to alienate the fans. It was a long time ago. There was a time when I was not considered a rulebreaker, let alone a killer. I would be a liar if I didn't say that I enjoyed those days. I did. But things didn't work out exactly as I wanted.

"You know, so much in wrestling is dependent on the fans. Don't let anyone tell you differently. This sport would not exist if it weren't for the fans. And they led to my 'fall from grace,' so to speak. Back in those early days when I was not considered a rulebreaker, the fans did not respond at all to anything I did. Nothing worse can happen to an athlete. He can tolerate being booed. But it is intolerable to be ignored. I certainly didn't like it. So I started breaking a few rules here and there, just to get some kind of reaction from the spectators. They responded. They began to hate me."

I was confused. Did Baker mean that he purposely wanted the hatred of the fans?

"Yes, yes, yes! I wanted them to

hate me. I just didn't want them to ignore me. 'Hate me,' I told them. They did."

But could they like him now? He certainly is a force to be reckoned with in wrestling. No one could ignore him today. Why doesn't he just return to the way he was originally?

"You have a point there. Except I could never go back now. I took things a little too far. Remember, I did kill two people in the ring. And I don't regret doing that."

This I had trouble understanding. After all, only moments before, Ox had been almost sorry about becoming a rulebreaker. Then he said he had no regrets about killing two men. It seemed to reek of hypocrisy. I said as much to Baker.

"All right, call me a hypocrite. I am. I say one thing and do another. We all do that. But I have no regrets, and for good reason. Those two deaths I caused did more to advance my career than anything else I ever did. Everyone began to fear me. People would cross to the other side of the street when they saw me coming. No one could afford to ignore me. The more this happened, the more I enjoyed it. I like being hated. I had fun being feared.

"It would be impossible for me to change now. And I don't want to change. I enjoy being the meanest kid on the block. And I no longer have to make any apologies for what I do. Everyone just accepts me as I am—rotten!"

Wow.

I stopped the interview right there. No more need be said by Ox Baker. He had said too much already. I had not anticipated that kind of response from him. No one could have. But he did give me one of the best interviews I've had in a long time.

Baker was wrong about one thing: I really don't understand him better now than I did before. No one will ever really be able to understand him. But if he wants the world to hate him, that's fine with me. If that's what he wants, and the fans agree, who am I to change things? □

MONEY...

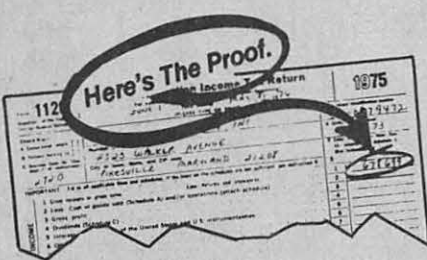
First Come, First Served.

"This is the system, the *whole* system and the *only* system I used to walk home with 500,000 clams. I GUARANTEE it will make you a winner in 30 days." **MIKE WARREN**

From now on, if you lose your shirt on the ponies, you have no one but yourself to blame.

Because I—Mike Warren—am going to show you how to win back your shirt, your bank balance and your zest for life. I'm going to lead you back to GREEN PASTURES and the GOOD LIFE you've always hankered for—the big house, the summer home, the swimming pool, the three cars, the six week vacations—the whole bit.

I'm going to teach you seven little secrets. Seven little secrets that earned me well over \$500,000 last year. \$300,000 the year before. \$150,000 the year before that. And \$75,000 the very first year I perfected my system.



Here's the proof: a photostat of Mike Warren's IRS return for Calendar 1975.

Nobody—but I mean NOBODY—can duplicate my record for picking winners over the past four years.

Which may sound like bragging. But the day you walk away from a parimutuel window with winnings of \$10, \$20 and even \$50 on a modest \$2 wager—as a result of using my system—you'll think I'm the best friend you ever had. And as your winnings pile up—and you really start to turn your life around... and as you realize you have now become a consistent winner at the track—you're going to start blowing me long distance kisses or sending me love notes like the ones I get every day:

Dear Mr. Warren:
You DID IT! You solved the problem I've been working on for years! I have never run across so accurate or refined a system of playing the horses in all my life. I have thrown away all the charts, plastic slides, and "professional systems" in my library. I just can't get over how your simple system put me onto winner after winner! TEN BUCKS!!!! Hell, you should charge three hundred times that for what you're disclosing!

Sincerely,
D.R.S., San Diego, CA 92117

Dear Mike,
What a payoff. \$15.20 for ELSIE to win and \$246.80 for the exacta—\$2,620 for a \$20 bet. Mike, thank you. You are free to use this letter and I will have it notarized.

Sincerely,
BOB COOKE, 3 West 51 St.
New York, N.Y. 10019

Sworn to me this
4th day of February 1976
NOTARY PUBLIC

Dear Mike,
Your method is fool proof. I have won 70% of the races I have received from you since Saturday. Again, thank you.
Randall W., Brooklyn, N.Y.

Convinced? Okay, but already I can hear you asking: "WHY IS THIS GUY GIVING IT AWAY?"

The answer is twofold and very simple. One, I'll make a bundle on the book I'm selling you.

Two, very few bettors have the character to stick to any system, let alone my "SYSTEM OF THE CENTURY".

So in a way, I'm challenging you as a bettor and as a man. Because if you think of it, there isn't a reason in the world why a serious bettor shouldn't be a consistent winner—maybe not to the tune of 500,000 a year—but still, he ought to be in the black. Even the occasional horseplayer shouldn't have to take a drubbing every time he visits the track.

Yet most bettors are consistent losers. Why? You'd better ask the shrinks. They claim the habitual loser secretly wants to lose. You figure it out.

All I know is, they lose and lose and lose and they never learn. It's a pity, but it has a paradoxical effect.

BECAUSE OF THE HABITUAL LOSERS, THE ODDS FAVOR THE MAN WITH A GOOD SYSTEM WHO STICKS TO IT.

In other words, it's the losers who feed the winners.

Tomorrow morning, when I get up, my biggest problem will be to figure out whether I should play golf, putter around with my Mercedes, take the wife to Acapulco, fly to Florida with my kids to see Disney World or even visit my in-laws.

I'm 33 years old. I can live this life style the rest of my days.

So when people tell me you can't beat the ponies, what can I say?

I beat them all the time. I NEVER lose. I've proved it.

WHAT IS "THE SYSTEM OF THE CENTURY"?

I could almost squeeze it in on the rest of this page. It's so simple, if you've never placed a bet before or even been to a race track, you'll consistently find yourself on the boards, walking away from the parimutuel window with \$10's, 20's and, yes, even \$50's for your \$2 wager.

The System consists of seven rules—seven rules you can read and memorize in just one hour at home. One of these rules—Rule 4—is so elementary that you can go to any race track with an infield turf (grass) course and start writing your own checks tomorrow as if you'd been a track pro for 20 years.

If you're a regular horseplayer, "The System of the Century" could put you on Easy Street as a permanent resident. Let me give you a clue: how many times have you spent hours poring over a single race, doping out every detail, figuring every angle... only to find that the horse you picked to begin with... and decided against for some reason even you can't remember—ramped home an easy winner? YOU ALMOST HAD IT, BUT YOU LOST IT. YOU SCRAPPED ONE RULE IN FAVOR OF ANOTHER. YOU HAD NO SYSTEM. YOU HAD NO PRIORITIES.

A lifetime at the track—under the wing of my father, who was a handicapper before me—listening

Who is Mike Warren?

The man RACING FORUM calls "The Jack Anderson of American handicapping," and the son of a handicapper, Mike Warren gained early exposure to the world of horses and tracks, jockeys and trainers, losers and winners.

Today, as America's premier handicapper, Mike is well on his way to becoming a self made millionaire at 33—because he picks 'em with uncanny accuracy. And he does it with more than talent.

In an atmosphere crackling with excitement, Mike leads a highly specialized network of professionals, fine-tuned and coordinated to produce one single product: winners.



Mike and his team dispense this precious product to subscribers as conscientiously as a first-rate investigative reporter reveals and interprets news as quickly as it happens.

to trainers, owners, jockeys, high rollers and handicappers—asking questions, taking notes, keeping records of wins and losses—and then putting it all together—this was how I learned what those priorities are.

And they're incorporated into "The System of the Century".

And now it's all yours. \$10 MAY BE ALL YOU NEED TO GET STARTED.

Here's how failsafe my system is... provided you follow my seven little rules strictly and without exception. Then you'll start cashing in on those big parimutuel tickets most people just dream about.

Now, I recognize that the world is full of skeptics—even the wise get fooled once in a while. So I make this proposition to you:

SEND ME \$10.00. I WON'T CASH YOUR CHECK FOR 30 DAYS.

That \$10.00 is payment in full for "The System of the Century".

Use the System at your local race track for 30 days, making sure to follow my rules as outlined therein. Bet as much as you want—and keep what you take in with my blessings! If my method fails to work in exactly the manner I've described, you have risked nothing—because I'll send your original check back to you uncashed. In fact, date your check one month ahead—that way nobody can touch your ten bucks while you prove for yourself whether my System is everything I say it is.

Could anything be fairer? I've proved my System works—it's making millions for a handful of smart bettors.

And here I am offering it to you with a 30 day free trial money back guarantee.

You're a smart bettor. How can you walk away from odds like that?

Sworn Statement...

This is to certify that all statements made in this ad are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. MIKE WARREN is a professional handicapper of Thoroughbred horses, and his gross income for the last twelve months was in excess of \$500,000.00.

A. Belous

CLIP AND MAIL TODAY

VSG-897

Mike Warren
The Baltimore Bulletin, Inc.
Professional Building
Baltimore, MD 21208

Dear Mike,
I can't afford to pass up your offer. Please send me "The System of the Century" by return mail. I understand that if your method doesn't make big money for me as you have outlined, all I have to do is return it within 30 days and my uncashed check will be returned to me.
On that basis, here is my check for \$10.00 dated one month from now. (If you're enclosing a money order that can't be dated ahead, you have the same money back guarantee.)
☐ For immediate shipment, first class, add 50c (in coin or stamps please.)

name _____
address _____
city _____ state _____ zip _____

Please make checks payable to "The Baltimore Bulletin".

NAMES MAKI

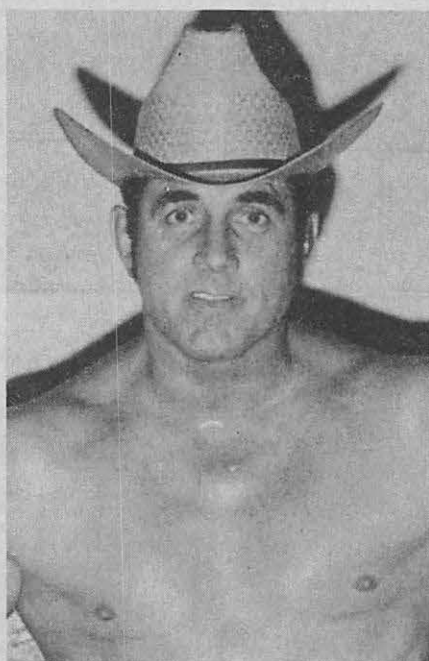
IN THE PAST, SUPERSTAR GRAHAM boasted that if he won one of the three major world titles, he would try to get matches against the other two champions—leading to the idea of the sport having one world champion. He's following through on that threat. Since winning the WWWF title, Graham has been wrestling in both WWWF and NWA areas! His main goal in the NWA is to put up his title against the NWA belt held by HARLEY



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

RACE. "And when I beat him," says Graham, "it is on to the AWA to take the title from NICK BOCKWINKLE!" . . . To the delight of every fan, COWBOY BOB ELLIS is wrestling regularly in Florida. Bob hopes to unseat BUDDY WOLFF from the state throne . . . Are those harsh words we have been hearing between KEN PATERA and manager CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO? . . . AWA champion NICK BOCKWINKLE is defending his title against TERRY FUNK—in Texas—against the orders of manager BOBBY HEENAN!

ERNIE LADD finally got OX



COWBOY BOB ELLIS

BAKER to wrestle him, but did not get any satisfaction. Baker came in with a foreign object and was disqualified three minutes into the match (after splitting Ladd's forehead open). He quickly fled to the dressing room before Ernie could retaliate . . . SEIG STANKE and HANS SCHRODER have failed in four attempts to take the Florida tag team belts from JACK and JERRY BRISCO . . . After his most recent match against HARLEY RACE, MR. WRESTLING II feels he can definitely win the title next time. "Race has a weakness that is so obvious I am shocked no one has noticed until now," says the masked man. "I found it too late in our match but next time I will go right to work and win the belt." . . . TONY GAREA complains too many fans underrate him. "The girls flock around me like I am a sex symbol," explains Tony. "I would sooner they admire me for the fine wrestler I am."

In one of the finest scientific confrontations ever seen, BOB BACKLUND wrestled to a draw against Britain's BILLY ROBINSON. Robinson said after the match, "This kid will be a world champion one day." . . . JERRY BRISCO is

trying to get SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK to agree to wrestle him. "I will even give him my share of the purse," vows Jerry. Humperdink, who manages several rulebreakers in the South, says he will not wrestle Jerry—period! . . . CHAVO GUERRERO has his close friends worried about him. He has been very depressed since he failed



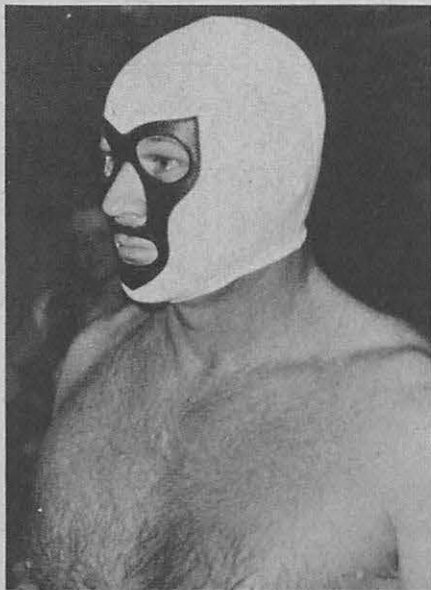
MIL MASCARAS

to capture the NWA Heavyweight title . . . MIL MASCARAS is finishing up another film in Mexico and then will be off again to California for a shot at the Americas title . . . PEDRO MORALES negotiating with AWA officials. He hopes to sign for a long awaited match against SUPER DESTROYER . . . STAN HANSEN and his deadly "lariat" may be headed back to the WWWF areas in the near future. "I would be there now but BRUNO SAMMARTINO is still making certain I am banned from the area until he leaves."

Young GINO HERNANDEZ back touring Texas rings. As you may recall, Gino got his start in that state under the tutelage of JOSE LOTHARIO . . . It is odd, but BLACK GORDMAN is in California—

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...



MR. WRESTLING II

without GOLIATH. Gordman is teaming with various partners and has agreed to be advised by RODDY PIPER for his matches in that state. Could trouble be brewing between these two Mexican rulebreakers... ANDRE THE GIANT is trying to lure CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW away from the East for a short time in order to have Strongbow as his partner for tag team bouts in Japan. Andre plans to spend about two months in the island nation... IVAN KOLOFF almost broke the arm of TONY ROCCO with a new hold he has invented. Tony admits if the time limit had not saved him, his arm would be in a cast today... BOB



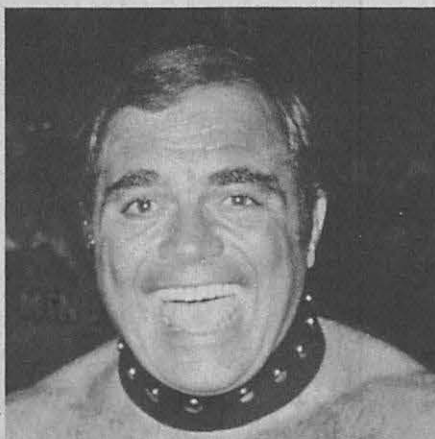
IVAN KOLOFF

ARMSTRONG now wears the southern title belt worn by JERRY LAWLER up until he clashed with Bob in Tennessee... PROFESSOR TANAKA and MR. FUGI looking better than ever as they continue to demolish all competition on the East Coast... TERRY FUNK is back on a full schedule and looking great. Brother DORY FUNK JR. continues to serve as a manager and advisor to his younger brother. Dory still feels, "A Funk will once again hold the NWA title."

TOR KAMATA is off to Japan minus manager FRED BLASSIE. Or should we assume *former* manager Fred Blassie?... CHRIS TAYLOR is making life miserable for scientific wrestlers. He says he plans to join



TERRY FUNK



JOHN TOLOS

KEN PATERA in a few months and form a tag team with him... JOHN TOLOS has not retired. The "Golden Greek" is making his



BOB BACKLUND

presence known in the Kansas City area... If the part of Starsky in the hit TV series "Starsky and Hutch" is vacated, JIM VALIANT wants to audition for the part! "I am twice as handsome as both of them," says Jim. "The girls would flip out over me. The show would triple their ratings!"

JOE LEDUC says STEVE STRONG would be a better wrestler—and win a lot more matches—if he followed the rules... THE EXECUTIONERS have mysteriously vanished... RAY STEVENS, continuing his all-out war against BOBBY HEENAN and "The Family," added BOBBY DUNCUM to his list of victims... ARMANDO GUERRERO, brother of Chavo, showing great improvement in California matches... HAYSTACKS CALHOUN is wrestling in the Mid-Atlantic areas... IVAN PUTSKI is furious STAN STASIAK has started legal proceeding to have Ivan's "Polish Hammer" banned. "If anything should be banned it should be Stasiak's Heart Punch. I never ended anyone's career with my Hammer!"

That's all the news for now. See you next month! □

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PE

If you join "The Wonderful World of Pen Pals," you can make new friends throughout the world. And all of your new pen pals will be wrestling fans too! We will print your picture right here in this magazine, and also a little bit of information about who you are. That way, your new pen pals will know something about you even before they start to send you their letters! Just think—you can have the chance to receive mail from all over the world! All you have to do is fill out the coupon below and mail it to us, along with a recent picture. We'll take it from there.

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ANNA WINTERBOWER (16)
1114 Shawnee
Kansas City, KS 66105
Enjoys all sports. Mike
George her favorite. Likes
good and bad guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



RONNIE LEE (12½)
100 Grant Street
Greenville, AL 36037
Enjoys fishing. Andre the
Giant his favorite. Likes
good guys. Anyone for PP's.



KENNY LAUTARET (9)
1415 Main Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501
Enjoys football. Russ
Francis his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



DAVID PAISLEY (16)
7001 Gumwood Circle
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
Enjoys music. Rocky
Johnson his favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



EVELYN BRILES (14)
6953 Old Kings Road
Jacksonville, FL 32219
Enjoys soccer. Tommy
Seigler her favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



DUANE BETO (14)
708 6th Street SE
Little Falls, MN 56345
Enjoys bowling. Billy
Robinson his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



NANCY SCHNEIDER (10)
85 Baltimore Ave.
Massapequa, NY 11758
Likes all sports. Chavo
Guerrero her favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



WANDA HUNTER (13)
125 Beech Cr. Dr.
Rome, GA 30161
Enjoys basketball. Mr.
Wrestling II her favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JESS BAYUIK (9)
153 Reservoir Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Enjoys football. Wahoo
McDaniel his favorite.
Likes good guys. Boys
for pen pals.



THOMAS MURPHY (11)
30 Brookside Ave.
Keansburg, NJ 07734
Enjoys football. Mil
Mascaras his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



GERALD MURPHY (10)
30 Brookside Ave.
Keansburg, NJ 07734
Likes baseball. Tony
Parisi his favorite.
Likes good guys. Boys
for pen pals.



STAN GORDON (16)
34868 Date Street
Yucaipa, CA 92399
Enjoys photography. Terry
Funk his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys. Anyone
for pen pals.

N PALS



DEBBIE BELL (18)
Rt 1, Box 83
Liberty, SC 29657
Enjoys swimming. Paul
Jones her favorite. Likes
good guys. Anyone for PP's.



MARK KENNEDY (13)
3728 Avenue K
Brooklyn, NY 11210
Collects baseball cards.
Ivan Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



DOUG WILSON (13)
225 Mountain View
Decatur, GA 30030
Likes most sports. Mil
Mascaras his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys. Girls
for pen pals.



MARTY SWINSON (13)
Rt 2, Box 6
Jamesville, NC 27846
Likes football. Dusty
Rhodes his favorite. Likes
good guys. Anyone for PP's.



DAWN DUNCAN (9)
Route 3
Danielsville, GA 30633
Enjoys horseback riding.
Andre the Giant her
favorite. Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



LEWIS PERKINS (14)
341 Woodland Ave.
Pennel, PA 19047
Enjoys weightlifting. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



PAM HOLCOMBE
Rte 1, Box 83
Liberty, SC 29657
Enjoys swimming. Ric Flair
her favorite. Likes bad
guys. Anyone for PP's.



ROBERT WHITE (13)
330 Dumont Ave. #6C
Brooklyn, NY 11212
Collects stamps. Ivan
Putski his favorite. Likes
good guys. Anyone for PP's.



STEPHEN AGNEW (14)
459 Candler Road
Toronto, Ont. CANADA
Likes football. Ivan
Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



PETER SMITH (13)
229 Hempstead Road
Spring Valley, NY 10977
Enjoys hockey. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



BILLY HARRIS (16)
Hartman, AR 72840
Enjoys rock music. Dick
Murdoch his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



FRANK RUSSO (11)
7612 18th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11214
Likes football. Mil
Mascaras his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



ANGELA HORNSTEIN (14)
19416 NE 122nd Avenue
Battleground, WA 98604
Enjoys swimming. Jimmy
Snuka her favorite. Likes
good guys. Anyone for PP's.



DAVE CLARK (16)
137 Temple St.
Owego, NY 13827
Enjoys boxing. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



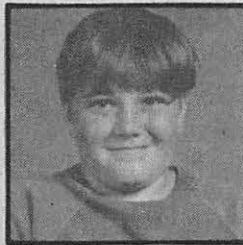
JIMMY VANHOY (11)
419 Martin Ave.
Graham, NC 27253
Likes sports. Andre
the Giant his favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



JOSE SANTIAGO (26)
15 North 2nd
Allentown, PA 18101
Likes all sports. Billy
Graham his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys. Girls
for pen pals.



GLADYS HADDIX (16)
Box 378
Jackson, KY 41339
Enjoys dancing. Bobo
Brazil her favorite. Likes
good guys. Boys for PP's.



GLENN DU BOIS (10)
4 Stelling Ave.
Charleston Hgts., SC 29405
Enjoys fishing. Greg
Valentine his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



GREG PRICE (13)
Rt 1, Box 24
Indian Trail, NC 28079
Collecting wrestling
memorabilia. Ric Flair
his favorite. Likes good
and bad guys. Anyone for PP's.



JEFF LeMOND (16)
3908 W. 32nd Street
Anderson, IN 46011
Likes photography. Verne
Gagne his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



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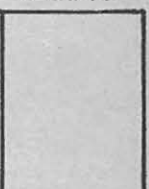
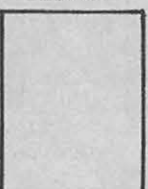
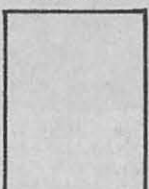
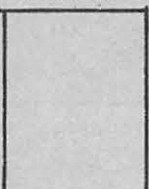
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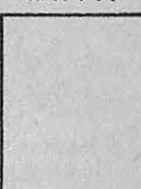
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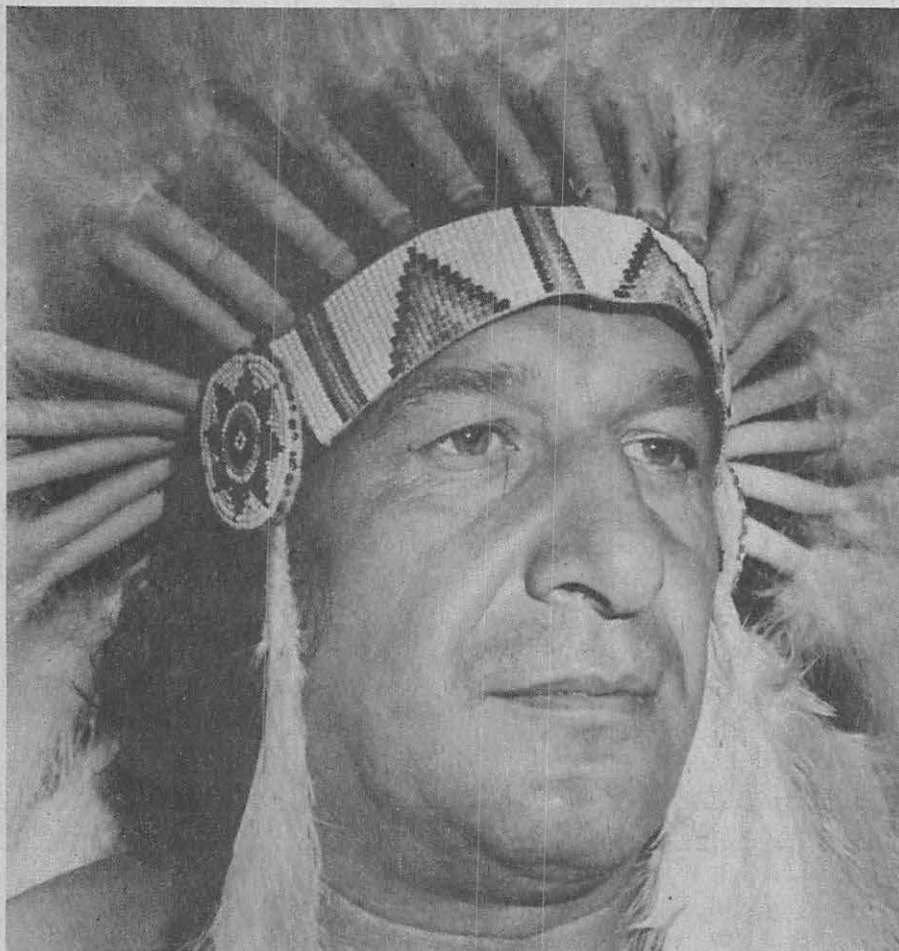
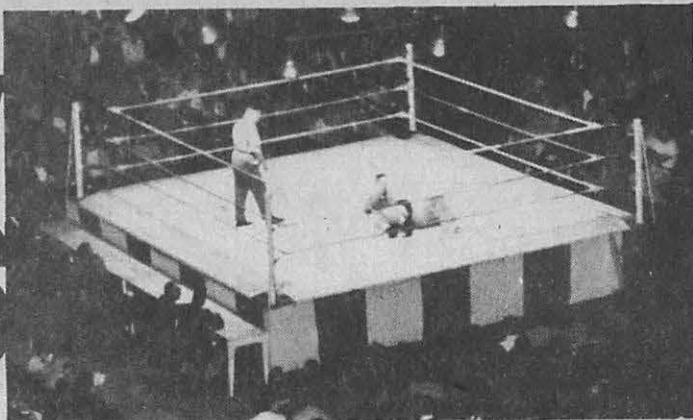
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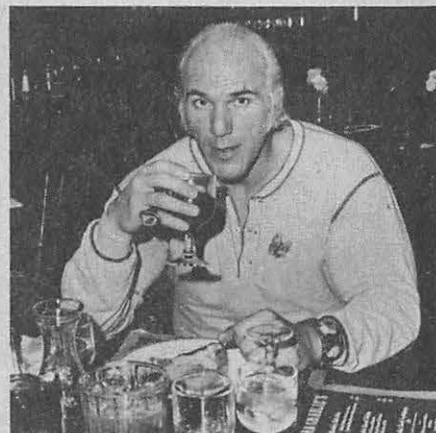
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SINCERELY YOURS



A Massachusetts reader wrote in to say he hoped the WWWF would finally give Chief Jay Strongbow (above) a chance to wrestle for the title presently held by Superstar Billy Graham (top right).



A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?

With any luck, the WWWF has learned its lesson. When it refused to give men like Chief Jay Strongbow, Ivan Putski, and Andre the Giant title shots, men like Superstar Billy Graham had excellent chances of winning the belt. Well, that is exactly what happened, and the WWWF got exactly what it deserved!

Maybe now the people who run that association will wake up and give men like Strongbow, Putski, and Andre the chances they deserve. These men are all potential champions. Billy Graham is a bum in comparison, and he will probably fall to any one of them. He won't be WWWF champion very long. Some scientific wrestler will see to that!

In the meantime, I hope the WWWF commissioners are willing to change their position and give these men the chance to wrestle for the belt. Or maybe they'll even get lucky and Bruno Sammartino will return to reclaim what is rightfully his

A REAL PITY

I had barely recovered from the shock of Bruno Sammartino losing his title when I picked up a copy of your June 1977 issue. After reading, "Superstar Graham: 'Bruno's Belt Looks Good Around My Waist!'" which was obviously written just a few days before the title changed hands, I really got upset.

No matter what Superstar Graham says, he will never be as

great as Bruno. He isn't half the wrestler Sammartino is, and he can't even hope to be. With any luck, he won't hold the belt very long.

But it is a real pity that Bruno lost the belt. The WWWF never had as great a champion, nor will it ever. I don't think I will ever get used to having Graham as champion.

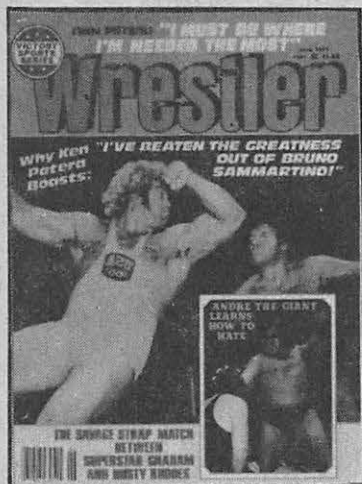
Alice Fremont
Dover, Del.

Thomas Yeats
Boston, Mass.

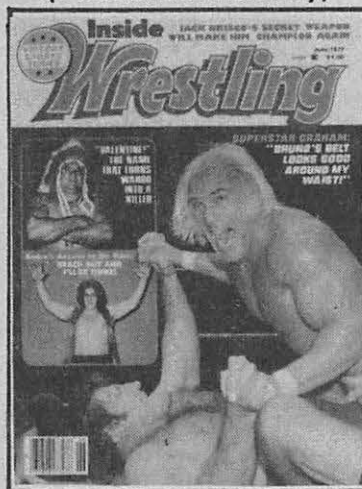
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HOTSEAT

BOB BACKLUND: "I HOPE I CAN FILL BRUNO'S SHOES"

HIS TALENT IS boundless. In less than two years, he has become a top contender for every world championship. He is the finest young wrestler to grace the sport since Bruno Sammartino's rookie days in 1959. He is a world champion of the future, a man who will make the sport glorious once again. He is Bob Backlund.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY
PETER KING

Q: Bob, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed on The Hotseat.

A: Thank you for inviting me.

Q: First of all, Bob, I suppose the fans, especially those in the WWF, want to know what your future plans are.

A: Well, I guess you're referring to that plot started by Albano, Grand Wizard, and Blassie. Thanks to INSIDE WRESTLING, the conspiracy has been exposed. Now it's only a matter of time before I wrestle in the WWF full time.

Q: Bob, as you know, we asked the fans to write us if they wanted you to stay in the area. The amount of mail we received was by far the largest concerning any single wrestler since our magazine started publishing. How does this make you feel?

A: The only word I can use to describe it is "grateful." The fans are wonderful. I wish I could

write back to everyone who sent in a letter. But that would take years, there were so many! Anyway, I just want to tell all the fans who wrote that I've read every single letter. They made me feel wonderful.

Q: Once the promoters saw the amount of mail we received, they immediately scheduled a match for you—your very first WWF arena appearance—at Madison

"The fans are wonderful. I wish I could write back to everyone who sent in a letter to stop the conspiracy against me. But writing those words would take years, there were so many! They made me feel wonderful."

Square Garden. In that bout, not only were you victorious, but you also unmasked your opponent, The Executioner. Bobby, how did the usually reserved New York fans take to you?

A: I think I went over fairly well with them.

Q: Fairly well? C'mon Bob, you're being too modest! I was there that night and I have never heard an

ovation like the one those fans gave you. After the match, they must have stood and applauded for well over five minutes.

A: Well, I must admit it was overwhelming. I just wish I could have run out into the audience and thanked each fan personally. You know, if I ever had any thoughts about leaving the WWF, the welcome those fans gave me killed that idea right then and there.

Q: Bob, as you know, now that Superstar Graham has defeated Bruno Sammartino, the WWF is ruled by probably the most notorious villain in the sport. By the way, have you ever wrestled Graham?

A: No. However, I have challenged him to bouts twice—once in the AWA and once in Florida.

Q: What happened?

A: Nothing! Graham claimed his schedule was too tight to fit in a match against me.

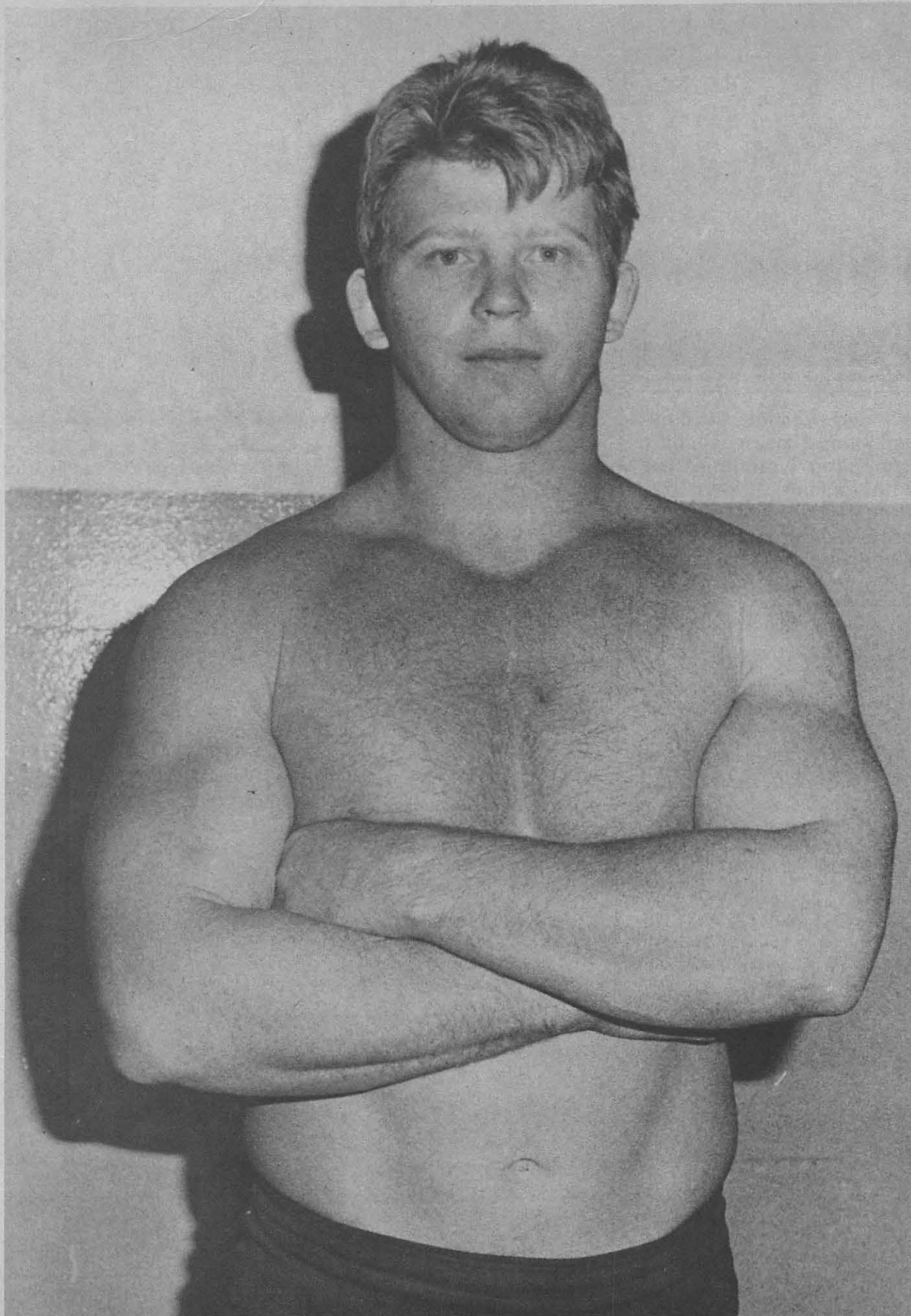
Q: Do you think there was any truth to that?

A: I know for a fact he was lying.

Q: Well, it seems certain a showdown between you and Graham will soon occur. Now that Graham has the belt, the WWF can order him to defend his title against you. Are you ready?

A: Yes, sir. The sooner, the better.

Q: Bobby, many experts, myself included, predict you will someday not only win the WWF belt, but carry on the legend





"I love wrestling. And by wrestling I mean scientific grappling. Not biting, and not kicking, or anything else like that. I want professional wrestling to be a sport I can be proud of."

started by Sammartino. Have you heard this?

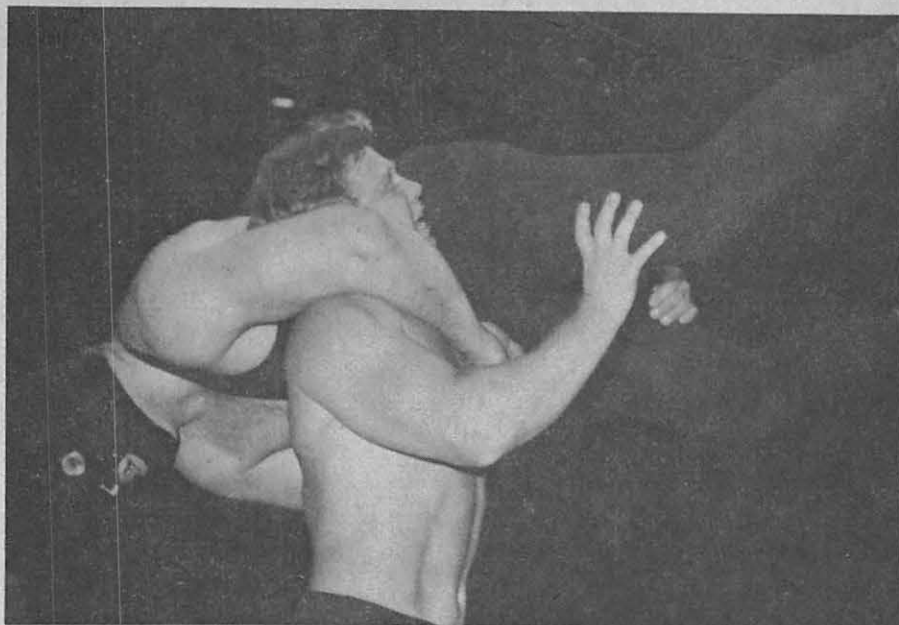
A: Yes, I have. Quite frankly, it scares me a little. These people are comparing me with Bruno, possibly the greatest wrestler in the history of professional wrestling. I hope I don't let them down. I hope I can fill Bruno's shoes.

Q: While working for a full time schedule in the WWF, where have you been wrestling?

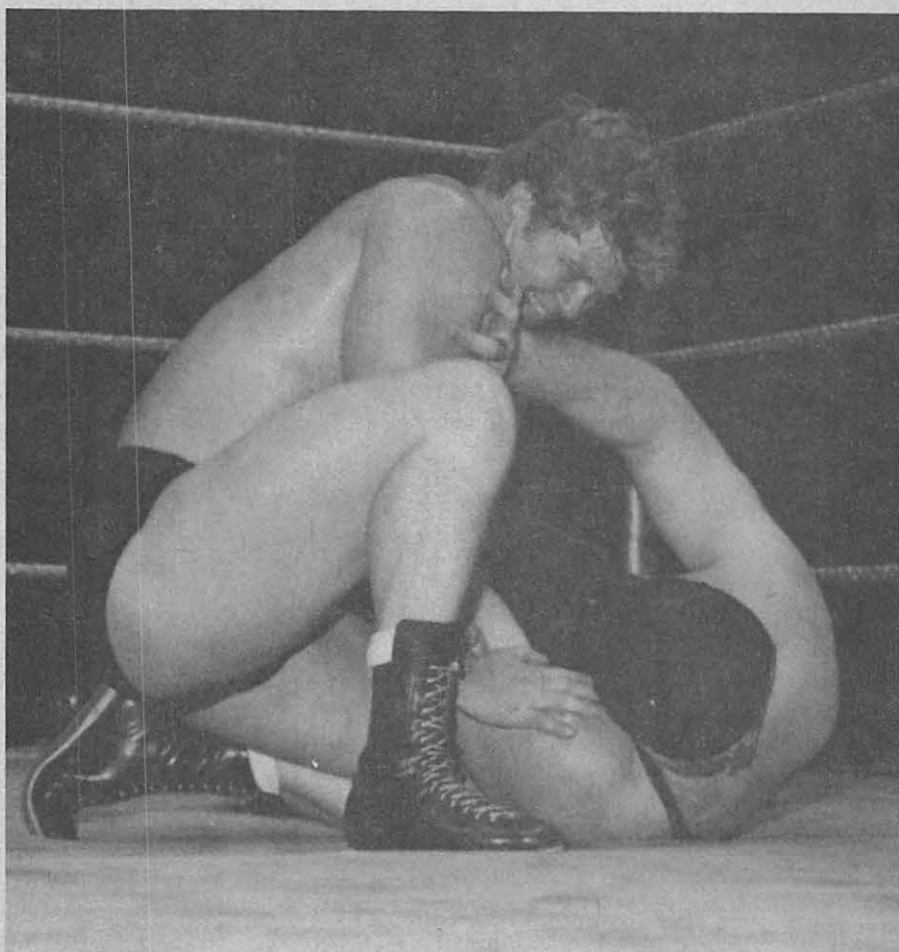
A: I've been wrestling in the AWA and also in the NWA southeastern area.

Q: Bob, this brings up another question, possibly the most important one I can ask you. You now have commitments in all three major alliances. Furthermore, each alliance is now championed by a rulebreaker. Does this mean that you are thinking of beating not one, but all three champions? In other words, are you trying to unify wrestling under a single champion, namely you?

A: To be totally honest, I have thought about that. I love wrestling. Any by wrestling I mean scientific grappling. Not biting, and not kicking, or anything else like that. I won the NCAA championships three



Above: Bob Backlund lifts Executioner #2 high in the air during their wild battle in Madison Square Garden. Below: Backlund has almost finished off his foe as the victim struggles to get free.

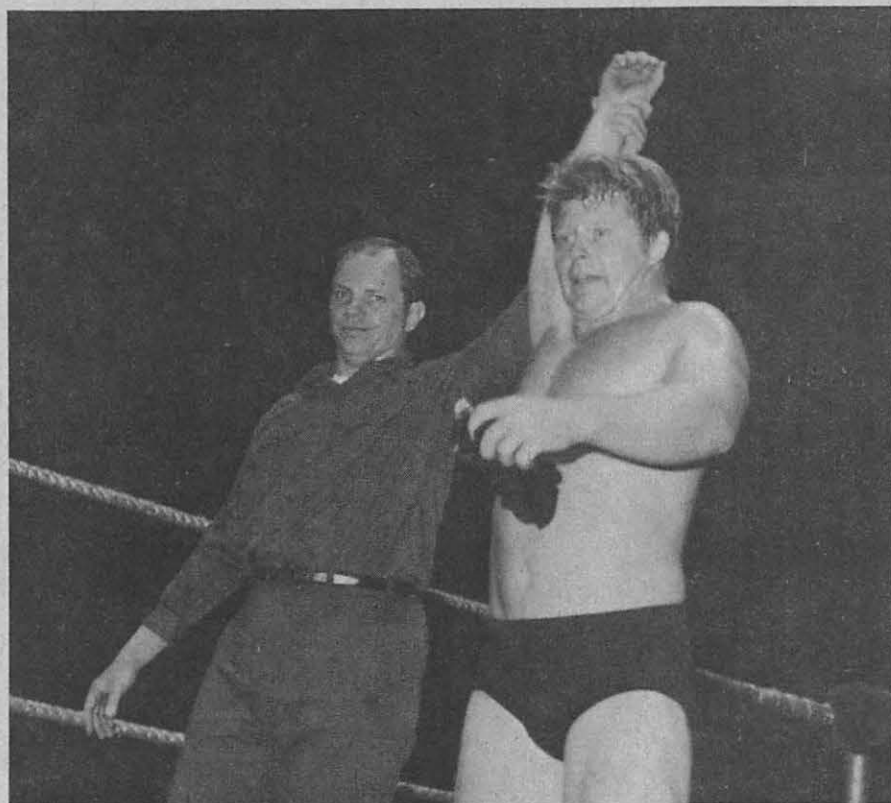


times while I was in college. I want professional wrestling to be a sport I can be proud of. Tell me, how can I be proud of a sport which has guys like Graham, Race, and Bockwinkel as its champions?

Q: I don't know. You tell me.

A: The answer is there is no way I be proud of the sport so long as men like them wear the championship belts.

Q: Well, to defeat men like Graham Race, and Bockwinkel, it will take a wrestler with extraordinary abilities. By the way, Bob, what



Above: To the cheers of thousands, Bob Backlund has his hand raised in victory following the defeat of Executioner #2. Right: Backlund is marshaling all his strength to turn this test of power to his advantage.

do you consider your strongest point as a wrestler to be?

A: I would have to say it's my speed. I can run the forty [yards] in 4.6 seconds.

Q: That's incredible! No other wrestler can come near that.

A: In addition, don't forget I'm one of the strongest men in the sport also. You know, guys like Patera and Graham mouth off about how strong they are. Well, I'll battle them in a test of strength anytime.

Q: It certainly is true you are one of the most versatile athletes competing in any sport. Bob, in the Fall issue of WRESTLING ANNUAL, you were the winner of a computer elimination tournament to decide the best wrestler in the world today.

A: Wow!

Q: Anyway, the computer selected you over such established superstars as Ivan Putski, Billy Graham, Mil Mascaras, Andre . . . well, a who's who of the greatest talent in the world. How do you feel about winning such a prestigious honor?



A: Gee, I guess I can only say I'm overwhelmed. You know, only last year I was a rookie. Now you're telling me some computer says I'm the best wrestler in the world. Gee whiz! It's all so . . . well . . . overwhelming. I really don't know what to say, except "thank you" to all the fans who were kind enough to support me so I could be considered for the computer tournament in the first place.

Q: Well, Bobby, I personally think the computer was absolutely correct. In all my years of reporting wrestling, I have never seen a wrestler who can do all the things you can do. By the way, is there anything you can't do well? Just what are your weak points.



"I think I'm blessed with enough talent to get myself out of any bad situation I get myself into. And the mistakes are happening less and less. Remember, I'm still learning this business!"

A: That's quite a question! If I give you the answer, I'll have a heckuva time defending myself in my next match! Let's just say my weakest point is my lack of overall experience.

Q: In other words, you still can get suckered into some bad maneuvers.

A: Yes, that's sort of what I mean. However, I think I'm blessed with enough talent to get myself out of any bad situation I get myself into. And the mistakes are happening less and less. Remember, I'm still learning this business.

Q: But you don't make the same mistake twice, do you!

A: Never!

Q: Bobby, you've come so far so fast, it's almost ridiculous to talk about goals. But what would you like to be able to accomplish someday that you've not as yet done?

A: It's like I said before. I want to make pro wrestling a sport I can be proud of. I would like to become an example to young people everywhere that you can succeed by following the rules.

Q: Bobby, you're quite a young man. Thank you for being on The Hotseat.

A: Thank you. □

NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS



This was the condition of Dusty Rhodes (above) after his wild brawl against The Sheik. Sheik also wound up bloody and battered. Ivan Putski (below) contemplates his next move as he stalks Ken Patera.

OLD BRIDGE, NEW JERSEY—

Correspondent: Edward Cole—Madison Central High was the setting for a battle between superpowers. Ken Patera, calling himself the world's strongest man, faced Ivan Putski, a man many feel deserves that accolade. The match started with both men battling cautiously. Ivan gained the first advantage. Ivan maneuvered Ken into a bearhug and crushed Patera within his huge arms. Patera escaped by raking his nails across Ivan's eyes. The match became a brawl after that, with both men finally toppling outside the ring. As their battle continued with unabated fury, the referee counted them out. Even that didn't stop the brawl. It took the intervention of Gorilla Monsoon before the battling ceased.



If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 58, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA—*Correspondent:* Glen Moore—Dusty Rhodes and Sheik had a battle that literally caromed throughout the Omni arena. The match was still young when Sheik pulled a pencil from his trunks and tried to slash at Rhodes. Dusty disarmed his foe and then ripped open Sheik's forehead. In the brawl, the referee was also cut. The official quickly disqualified both men. However, the brawl continued to rage. For 15 minutes, the two men ran riot throughout the arena, battering away at each other. The battle finally ended when Sheik found a chain and smashed Rhodes across the head. Dusty sank to the concrete floor as Sheik then ran back to the dressing room.

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE—*Correspondent:* Brett Clark—Ron Fuller came close to taking Harley Race's NWA title in a wild match held at the Knoxville Civic Coliseum. It started out to be a scientific match and both men exhibited great skill and ability. Race brilliantly captured Fuller in a suplex, but Ron kicked out an instant before the pin was official. Moments later, both men lost their tempers and a wild brawl ensued. The action grew so furious, the pair toppled out of the ring. Their battling continued outside the field of battle, forcing the referee to count out both

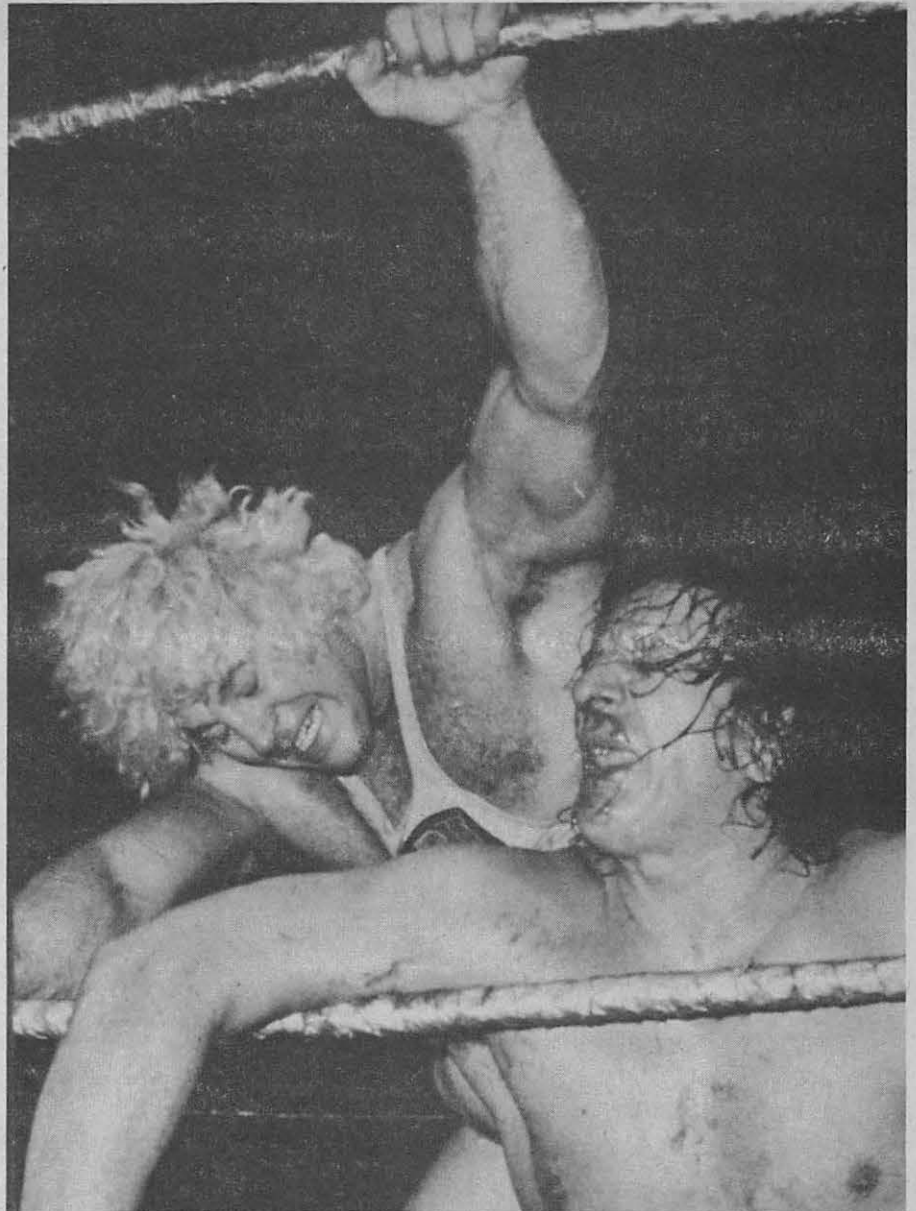


Jack Brisco enters the ring to do battle against Russia's Ivan Koloff. Jack was able to overpower the "Russian Bear" in a titanic struggle.

men. In other matches, Nelson Royal conquered Jimmy Golden . . . Bob Armstrong overwhelmed Jerry Lawler for a popular victory . . . Mongolian Stomper's reprehensible tactics earned him an undeserved victory over Robert Fuller . . . Fans were heartbroken when Tommy Rich and Bill Dundee fell to the Von Steigers.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—*Correspondent:* James Carpenter—In an action-filled evening of wrestling, Jack Brisco retained his Missouri State title by defeating Ivan Koloff. For a while, it looked like the Russian grappler's challenge would be successful. However, Brisco is a veteran when it comes to the pressure of a rough title match and brilliantly turned the bout around. Koloff grew frustrated and made a fatal error, leaving himself wide open to Brisco's figure-four leglock. Jack saw his advantage and won the match. Other bouts the same evening saw Bruiser and Superstar Billy Graham war until a double disqualification was announced . . . Pat O'Connor and Rocky Johnson valiantly struggled in vain against Blackjack Lanza and Bobby Duncum.

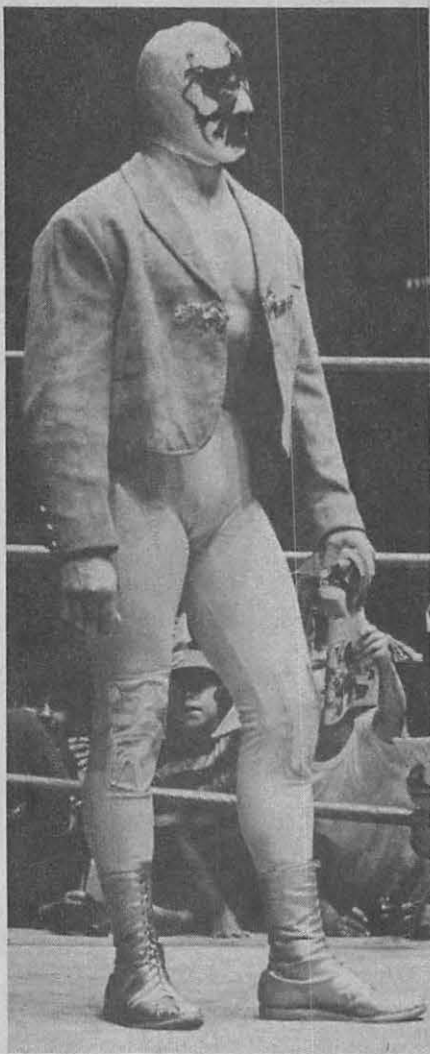
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA—*Correspondent:* Marguerite Salem—Fans here were treated to a remarkable lumberjack match that saw Dusty Rhodes and Buddy Wolff almost tear each other to pieces. From the opening moments, the



In one of the bloodiest and most violent battles ever seen at Madison Square Garden, Ken Patera smashes his knee into Chief Jay Strongbow's back. The wild brawl ended in a draw.

pair battled furiously. Dusty got the first advantage and threw Wolff to the canvas several times. Then, Dusty, looking like a ferocious bull, rammed Wolff into the corner of the ring. The staggering Wolff couldn't prevent Dusty from snaring him in a figure-four leglock. However, Buddy managed to grab the ropes and Rhodes was forced to release him. As soon as he was free, Wolff took the advantage. Wolff loosened a turnbuckle and smashed Dusty's head into the steel post. A huge gash opened across Dusty's scalp. Wolff then knocked Rhodes into the referee, stunning the man. Then, all the wrestlers who surround a ring during a lumberjack match, leaped into the fray. Rhodes grabbed Wolff. Ivan Koloff climbed to the top rope,

intending to leap on Rhodes and free Buddy. Instead, Dusty rolled away and Ivan smashed Wolff. Moments later, the match was over. NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK—*Correspondent:* Nick Dell'Acqua—Superstar Billy Graham, the new WWWF champion, had trouble early on with his first title challenger, Gorilla Monsoon, but turned the action around and defeated the popular mat star. Ex-champion Bruno Sammartino proved he is still a superb wrestler by totally dominating his bout against George "The Animal" Steele . . . Baron Von Raschke and Ivan Putski wrestled to a draw . . . A bloody confrontation between Chief Jay Strongbow and Ken Patera also ended in a draw. □

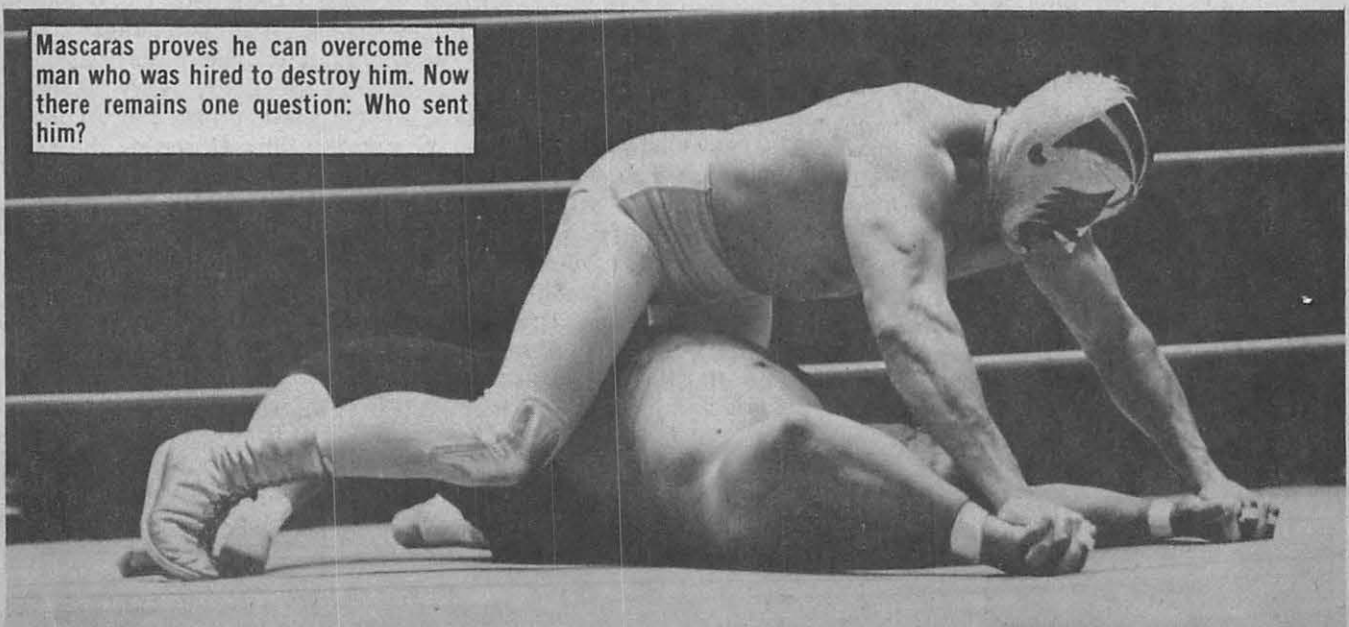


THE MAN WH HIRED TO DE MIL MASCA

PHOTOS BY THEO EHRET

No one knows why Mil Mascaras has become the target of some unknown person. What is known is that the mystery man has hired Professor Toru Tanaka to wipe Mascaras off the wrestling map. If Mascaras does survive Tanaka, what happens next?

Mascaras proves he can overcome the man who was hired to destroy him. Now there remains one question: Who sent him?



"I WAS SENT."

But who sent him?

"I have come to destroy Mil Mascaras."

Why?

Professor Tanaka refused to elaborate. He would only say he had been sent to destroy Mil Mascaras. He would not say who sent him or why he was sent. He simply demanded to be matched against the famed Mexican wrestler. He said it was of extreme importance.

The promoters were dumbfounded. They did not understand why Tanaka had suddenly demanded a match against Mascaras. Their first impulse was

scheduled battle, Tanaka was very vocal: "The time has come," he said, "for someone to destroy Mil Mascaras. I have been selected to do the pleasant task. I am honored to accept this assignment."

"Ever since he started wrestling, Mil Mascaras has made many enemies. The time has come for these men to have their revenge. That is why I was sent. I can say no more, except that I will do what I was sent to do."

Professor Tanaka may have said more than he should have said. He made it clear why he was being sent—someone with a grudge against Mascaras wanted revenge. He did not say who it was, but people could easily speculate. There are any number of opponents Mil has faced over the years who were defeated by the Mexican grappler. It could be any one of them. However, it is

(Continued on page 46)

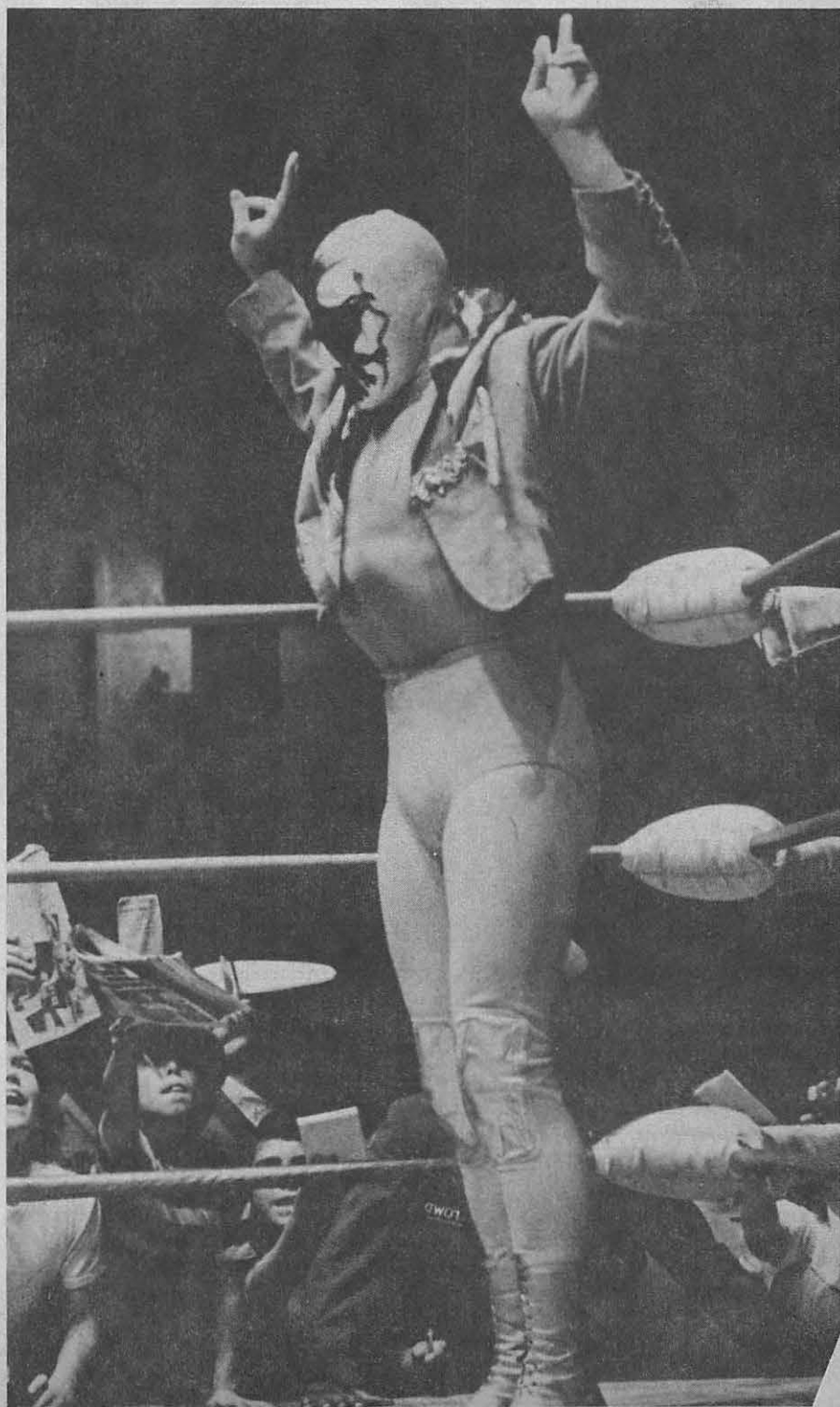
O WAS STROY RAS

to find out why the Japanese wrestler had asked for such a match. But Tanaka refused to answer any of their questions. He just kept saying what he had been saying, "I have come to destroy Mil Mascaras."

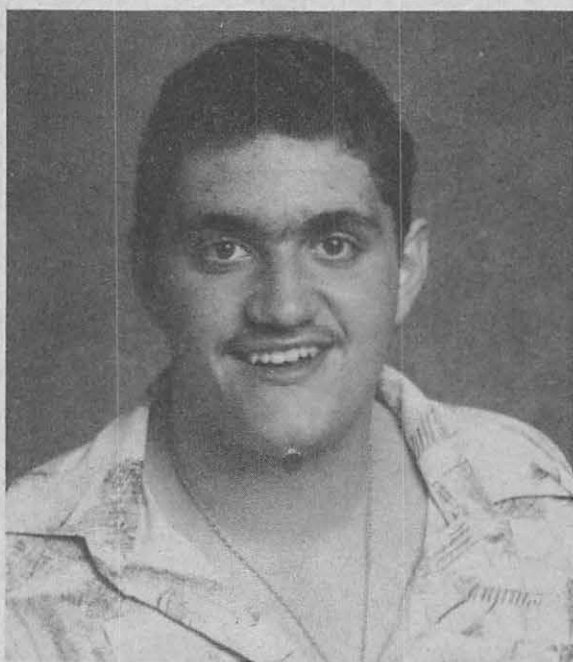
Mil was immediately contacted by the promoters. Did he want to wrestle Tanaka? The masked Mexican grappler knew he couldn't refuse. A date and place was set.

But the mystery surrounding Tanaka's sudden demand would not go away. As more people heard about the wrestler being sent to destroy Mil, the controversy grew. Some people demanded a complete investigation into the matter, but no one knew where to begin. Tanaka would not talk, at least regarding who sent him.

Yet Professor Tanaka was more than willing to talk about Mil Mascaras, and not in very flattering terms. In the days before their



HERE IS W FAN OF TH



I am not writing for myself, but for my brother Fred.

Day after day I am astounded by his devotion to the sport of wrestling. He works at his job all day, yet he still is able to find time to attend a brutal workout in the evening. He even found a professional wrestler to help him train. He took up football to make sure he'll be in shape. Fred attends every match to observe holds and maneuvers by the wrestlers and practices them at the local gym.

His whole life is centered around the sport. He eats, drinks, and sleeps wrestling. Wrestling is his main goal in life—his only goal. Fred has put a lot of time, effort, and money into wrestling, but that doesn't bother me. It's the sport in which he intends to make a career. He has had many obstacles in his path, and has had to make many sacrifices, but I think he's going to make it!

MARGUERITE AND FRED SALEM
Boynton Beach, Florida

GUEST JUDGE: GREG GAGNE

BEST OF LUCK, Fred! But with a family like yours behind you, and the will to succeed, you can't help but be a success.

What a fine sister Marguerite must be! Any man would be lucky to have her rooting for him. With her gift of language and obvious respect for wrestling, chances are she could have won the "Top Fan of the Month" honor for herself. Instead, she chose to give her brother the attention because of his sacrifices for the sport he loves.

I've been a very lucky person. My father was a top wrestler before I even considered entering the sport. He gave me all the breaks and encouragement a man can ask for. Fred, like so many others, has to scratch and claw his way to a break. It takes years of dedication and determination. However, from his wonderful sister's description, Fred has what it takes.

I guess I'm a sucker for anyone who wants to become a wrestler. All you have to do is walk into a gym and you're my friend. That probably had a lot to do with my choosing Fred and Marguerite for the honor. I've always felt a man who chooses a career in wrestling is in many ways my brother, a person to be helped whenever possible. As soon as I saw Fred's need for recognition

WRESTLING'S FAN OF THE MONTH

among wrestling fans, I decided to award him this honor.

I want everyone to look at Fred's photo. Memorize the features. When this man enters the arena, cheer him on. He has made many sacrifices to be in that arena. Respect his skill and admire his determination.

And don't forget his sister who stood behind him during the lean years. There is no photo of her, and perhaps that's for the best. Just think of her as the woman you would like to have standing behind you when the going gets rough. We may not know what color her hair is, or how fashionable her figure is, but we know exactly what is in her heart. For that, we love her.

These people aren't only fans, their lifeblood flows in the sport. Without them, and those like them all over the world, there would be no wrestling. Though I have never met Fred, I know exactly what makes him tick. I know the joy he feels when his body functions at its peak, the excitement at cheers from a crowd. Fred knows the same things about me. Is it any wonder I think of him as my brother?

Congratulations to both Salems, two wonderful representatives of a fine family. I'm happy to make them wrestling fans of the month. I'm even happier knowing what great gifts are in store for them in the future. □

HOW YOU CAN BECOME WRESTLING'S FAN OF THE MONTH

If you think you deserve this honor, simply send us a photo of yourself and a 100-word essay telling why you're the best fan. This can take any form from straight narrative to a poem. Photos cannot be returned.

The entries will be judged by our staff and a different wrestling star each month. The grappler will also tell why he voted the way he did, which may be the most revealing article about a wrestler you'll ever read.

Remember, the contest is called "Wrestling Fan of the Month," not "A Wrestler's Fan of the Month." This contest is intended to honor a sport, not a particular participant.

So while we admire those who work long and selflessly on their favorite wrestler's fan magazine, that's not a qualification in this contest. Fan club workers are rightfully honored elsewhere.

Without the fan, wrestling would wither and die. Because of the fans, wrestling has become the most popular sport in the world. It's about time the fans receive the recognition they deserve.

As soon as possible, send your photos and essays to:

TOP FAN CONTEST
c/o INSIDE WRESTLING
Box 58
Rockville Centre, N.Y.
11571

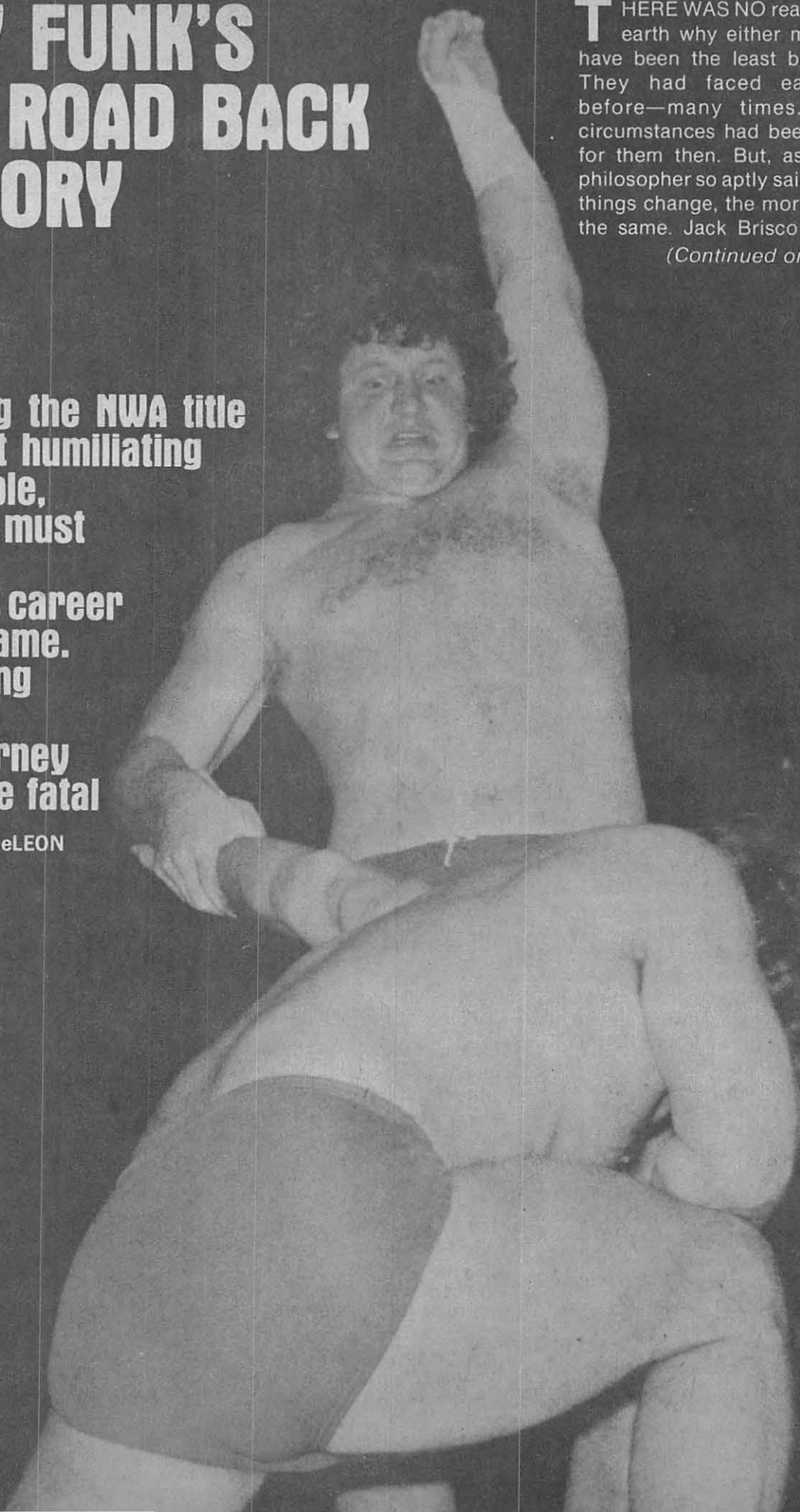
TERRY FUNK'S LONG ROAD BACK TO GLORY

After losing the NWA title in the most humiliating way possible, Terry Funk must now try to salvage his career and good name. He has a long way to go, and the journey could prove fatal

PHOTOS BY DON DeLEON

THERE WAS NO reason on this earth why either man should have been the least bit nervous. They had faced each other before—many times. But the circumstances had been different for them then. But, as a French philosopher so aptly said, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Jack Brisco and Terry

(Continued on page 48)

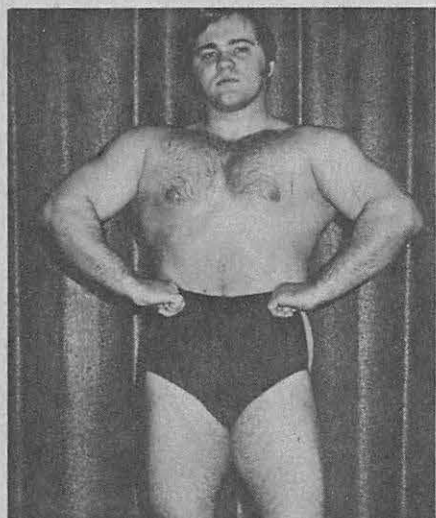
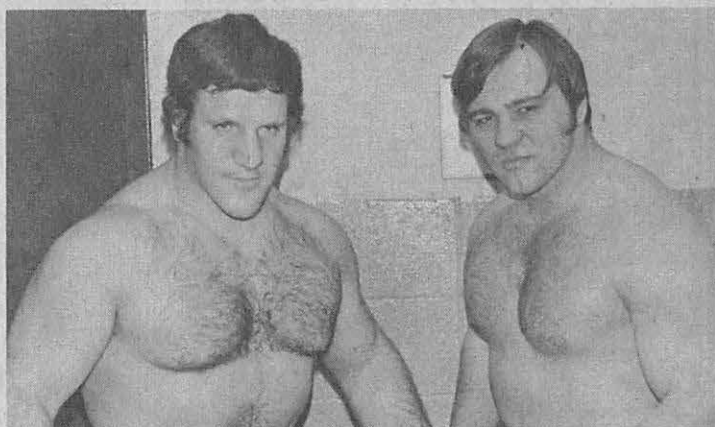


INSIDE WRESTLING

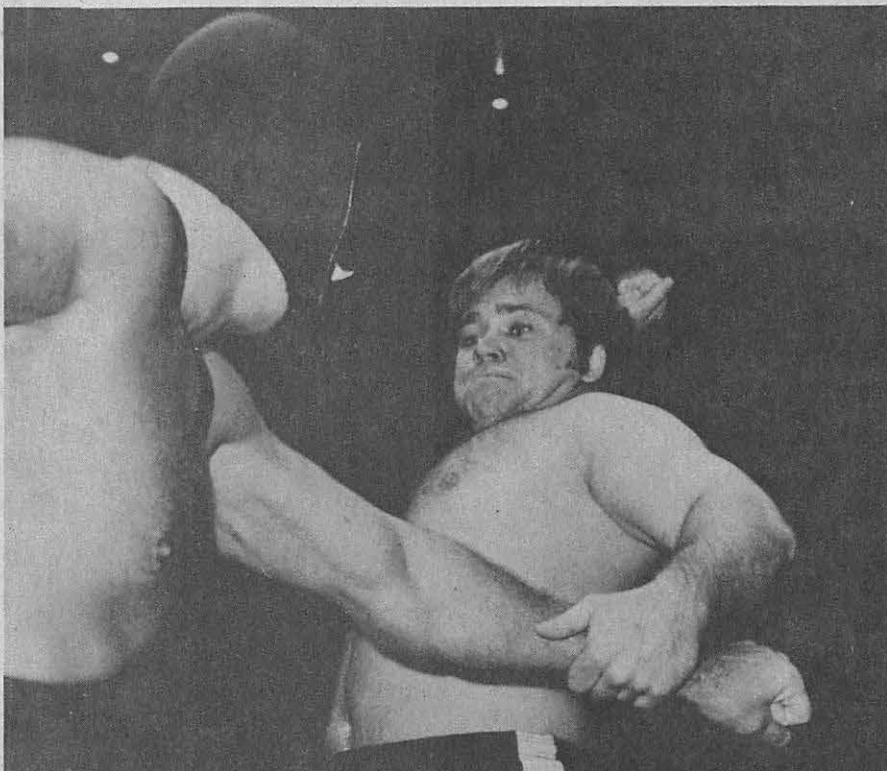
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capsule profile

LARRY ZBYSZKO

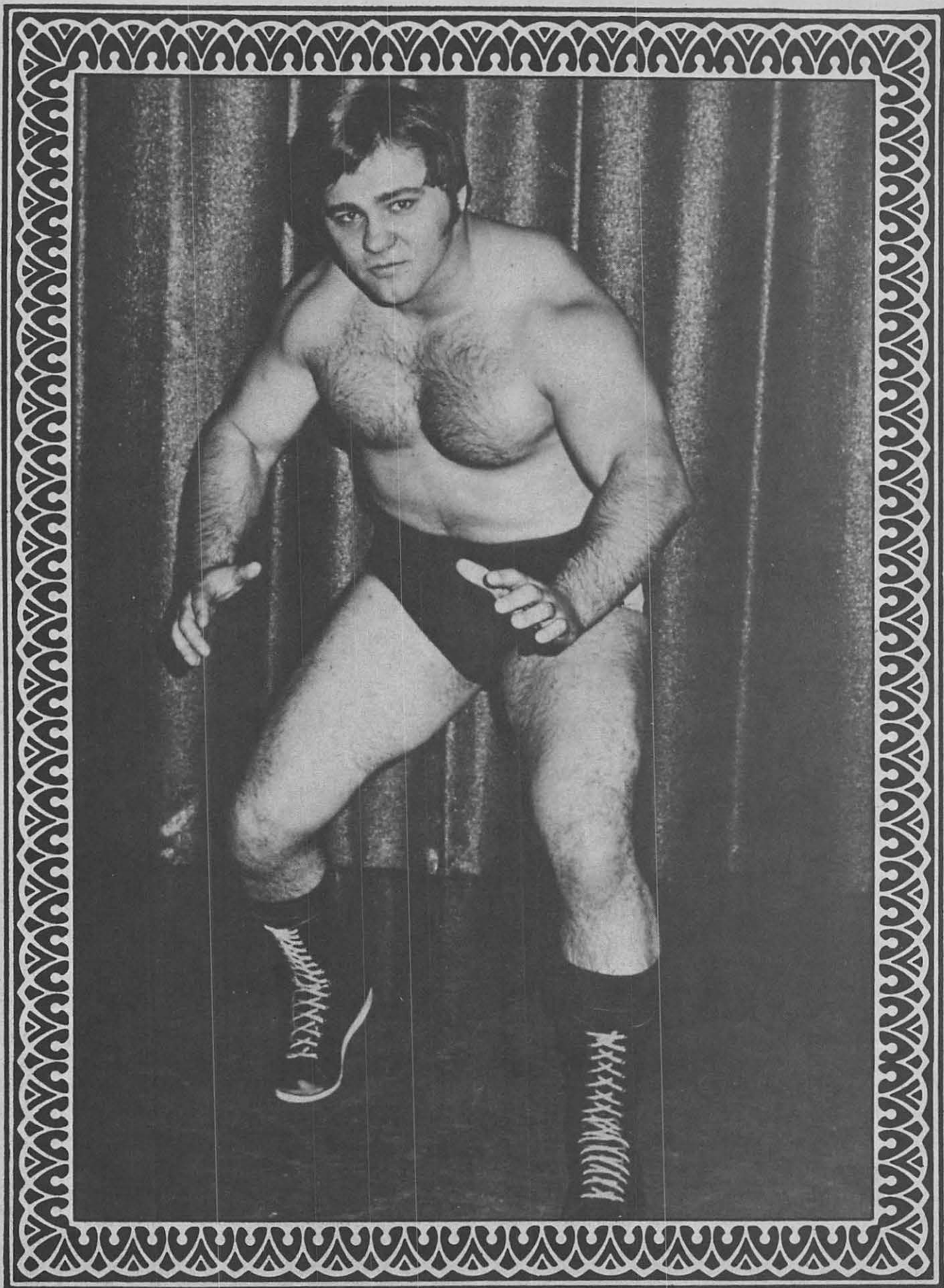


HE'S A STAR member of the core group of rising young athletes in the sport, all of whom have a fabulous future ahead of them . . . He began his career apprenticing to ex-WWWF champion Bruno Sammartino (*"I was really lucky to become his pupil. A lot of people would give their right arm for the same chance."*) . . . Has a wrestling style similar to that of his mentor, but differs from Sammartino in many important ways . . . Even as a teenager, he had a special aptitude for wrestling, which is why Bruno agreed to be his



teacher . . . He is now recognized as being his own man, and has grown independent of his mentor (*"There comes a time when everyone must break away. That time has come for me, and Bruno understands this completely."*) . . . He is still developing his talents—which are considerable—and will soon be able to be

considered a superstar in his own right . . . Has already battled some of the most vicious men in the sport and has proven he knows how to handle himself (*"I've made a few mistakes on my own, but I've done a lot of things right. That counts."*) . . . There's a championship in his future, but it is still a few years away. □



Ken Patera's headlock on Harley Race will lead him to victory and the NWA belt (below). But the belt will be taken from him because of Lou Albano (oval).



KEN PATERA— NWA CHAMPION?

BY ALL RIGHTS, Ken Patera should be wearing the championship belt of the NWA. He won it. He deserves it. According to all the rules and regulations of that association, he is champion. But he is not champion. He does not have the belt. And he will probably never hold that title.

And Lou Albano is to blame. No one is more upset by the situation than Ken Patera. Harley Race is quite relieved. He even sent Albano a thank-you note for all the manager did for him, as well he should. Race was the only person who profited from the situation.

Of course, Patera should have

realized there would be trouble the minute he decided to cross his manager. Lou Albano can be your best friend in the world when you do what he wants you to do. But do just one thing which displeases him, and he can become your worst enemy. You do not make him mad twice. *(Continued on page 54)*

No one crosses Captain Lou Albano. Just ask Ken Patera. Stealing a title is just one of the many ways Albano shows a wrestler he is under the Captain's thumb and there is no way to squirm free!

PHOTOS BY RICK OBERDING

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World Wide Wrestling Federation



Champion:
SUPERSTAR GRAHAM



1—BRUNO
SAMMARTINO

American Wrestling Association



Champion: NICK
BOCKWINKLE



1—RAY STEVENS

National Wrestling Alliance



Champion: HARLEY
RACE



1—DUSTY RHODES

Most Popular Wrestlers



1—ANDRE THE
GIANT



2—DUSTY RHODES

Tag Teams



1—RIC FLAIR & GREG
VALENTINE



Most Hated Wrestlers



1—ABDULLAH THE
BUTCHER



2—THE SHEIK



2—IVAN PUTSKI



3—BOB BACKLUND



4—CHIEF
STRONGBOW

- 5—KEN PATERA
- 6—BARON VON RASCHKE
- 7—PETER MAIVIA
- 8—LARRY ZBYSZKO
- 9—GEORGE STEELE
- 10—TONY GAREA



2—VERNE GAGNE



3—CRUSHER



4—LARRY HENNIG

- 5—BILLY ROBINSON
- 6—GREG GAGNE
- 7—PEDRO MORALES
- 8—JIM BRUNZELL
- 9—SUPER DESTI YER
- 10—ANGELO MOSCA



2—TERRY FUNK



3—JACK BRISCO



4—PAUL JONES

- 5—MR. WRESTLING II
- 6—THE SHEIK
- 7—DORY FUNK JR.
- 8—RIC FLAIR
- 9—CHAVO GUERRERO
- 10—STEVE KEIRN



3—BRUNO
SAMMARTINO

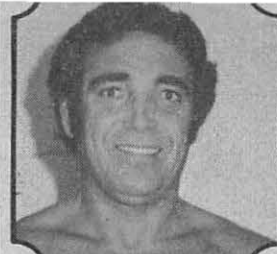


4—BOB BACKLUND



5—MIL MASCARAS

- 6—MR. WRESTLING II
- 7—IVAN PUTSKI
- 8—CHIEF STRONGBOW
- 9—MIGHTY IGOR
- 10—PAUL JONES



2—STRONGBOW
& WHITEWOLF



3—BLACKJACK
LANZA & BOBBY
DUNCUM

- 4—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
- 5—MR. FUGI & PROFESSOR TANAKA
- 6—JACK & JERRY BRISCO
- 7—GOLIATH & BLACK GORDMAN
- 8—CRUSHER & VERNE GAGNE
- 9—THE VALIANT BROTHERS
- 10—MIL MASCARAS & JOSE LOTHARIO



3—SUPERSTAR
GRAHAM



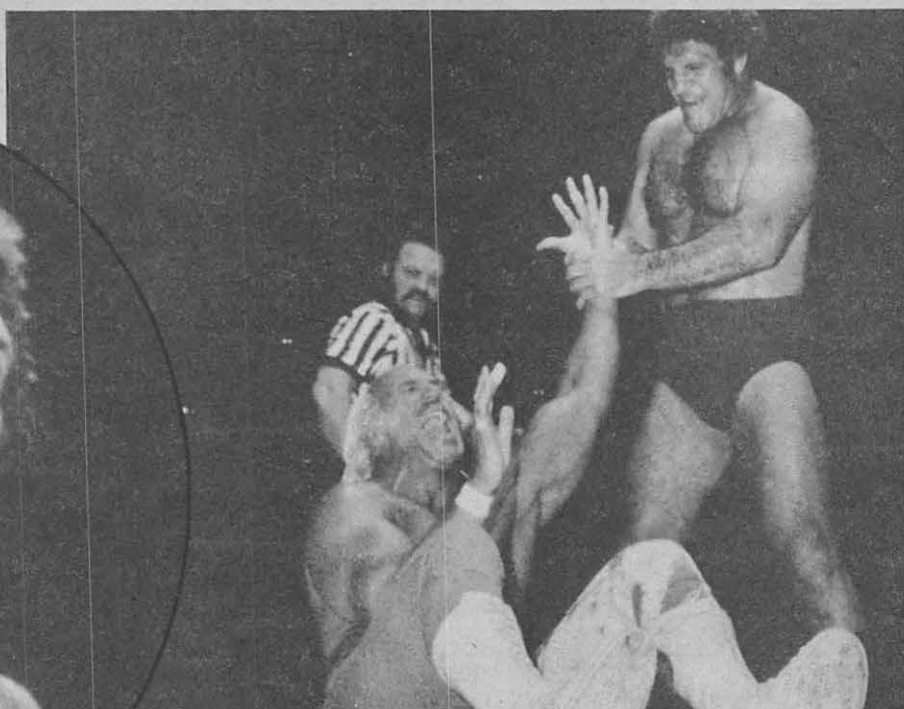
4—STAN HANSEN



5—KEN PATERA

- 6—RIC FLAIR
- 7—NICK BOCKWINKLE
- 8—BRUISER BRODIE
- 9—BARON VON RASCHKE
- 10—RODDY PIPER

Right: Bruno Sammartino makes Billy Graham scream with pain. Below: a weary Bruno after the match.



PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

Ex-Champion
Sammartino Vows:

"NEXT TIME
I WRESTLE GRAHAM
I'LL KILL HIM"

THE ROOM GREW hushed as Bruno Sammartino entered. The reporters who had covered his matches for years, seen him at his best during two championship reigns, fell silent. What would be the effect of losing his title? Would Sammartino remain a champion in defeat as well as victory?

Could any man maintain his dignity after losing a world title under such circumstances? Superstar Billy Graham got the WWF belt due to cheating, luck, and the referee's obstructed vision. No one would blame Bruno

for being bitter. All would regret the bitterness destroying the man. In a few moments, Bruno would speak, revealing the depth of his anguish and despair. Everyone held their breaths.

"Superstar Billy Graham," Bruno began, "is currently WWF champion of the world. There is nothing I can do about that. But I swear to cripple the man the first chance I get.

"He didn't steal my title; 'steal' is the wrong word. He did what he usually does; cheats like a savage. This time, he got lucky. The referee

couldn't see what he'd done. Before going any further, let's get straight: the referee is not to blame. The man couldn't be expected to see what Graham did. The new champion is expert at hiding illegal maneuvers from officials. No referee can be expected to do the impossible.

"Getting back to Graham, he got lucky. He did the wrong thing at the right time. He wound up with the title. He disgraced it by his cheating and crude brutality. The title has made me what I am today, provided for my wife and children. I owe the title everything. I can't tolerate the

Though he has lost the WWWF title, Bruno Sammartino hasn't lost the will to win. Here is his first declaration after being defeated. This may be looked back upon as the most important statement in wrestling history

Graham ruthlessly rakes Sammartino's neck across the ropes, hoping to burn the tender flesh of the throat. It's a typical Graham trick.

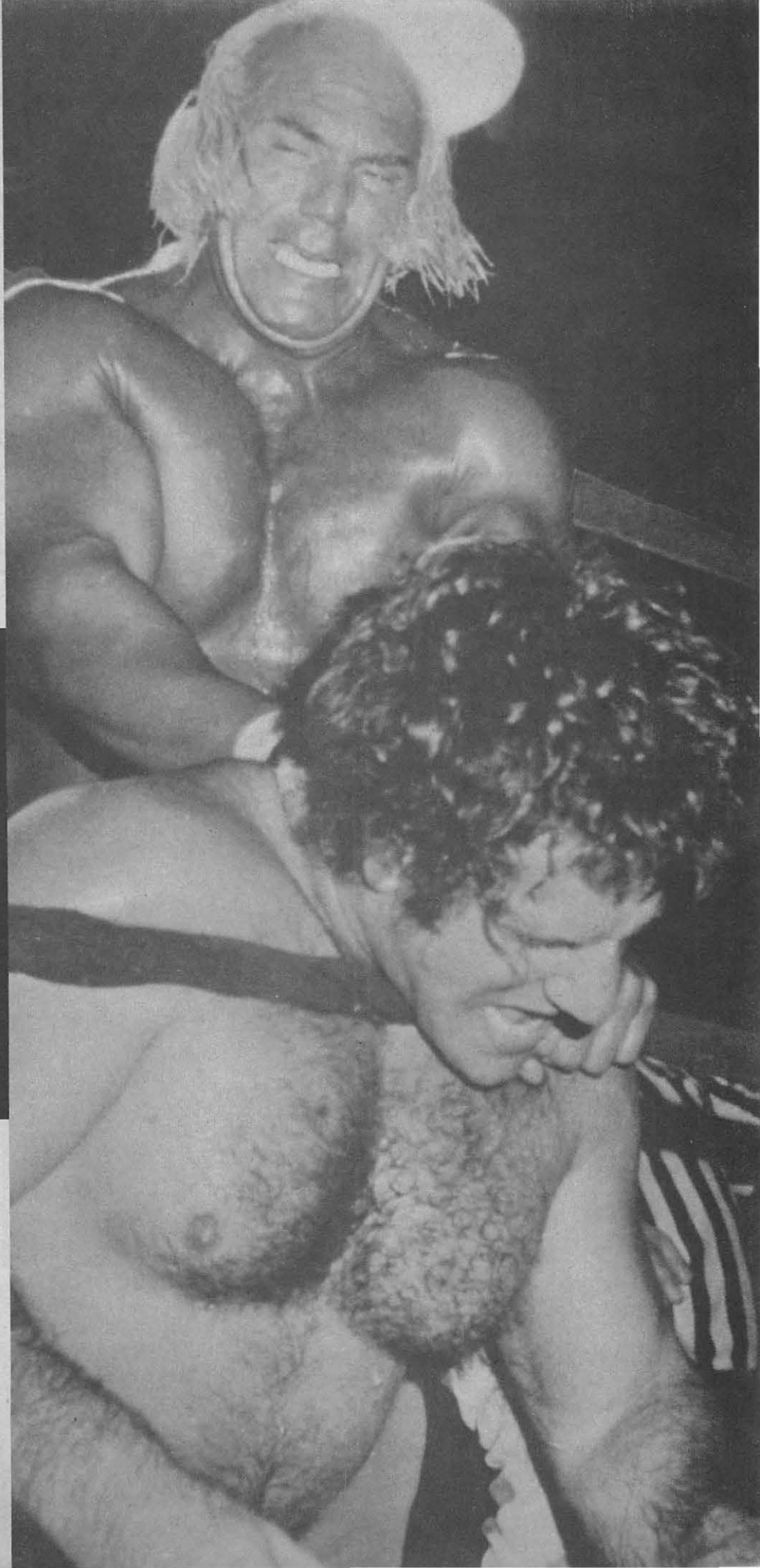
AM . . .
IM!"

belt being disgraced by Graham's reprehensible tactics. There shall be no rest for me until he's defeated.

"Because of this, I'm cutting back on my schedule. I'm not going to wrestle as often to give me more time for preparation. There are many new maneuvers to perfect, new strategies to develop. I'll have to work harder than ever before. There'll be sacrifices. I must make them.

"I'm going to have to defeat Superstar Billy Graham. The title depends on it. The honor of the

(Continued on page 58)



TOP WRESTLE

YOUR QUESTION

Do you have a question which concerns all of wrestling? Well, each month in **INSIDE WRESTLING**, the sport's greatest stars will answer a question sent in by a reader. If you wish to have your question answered by the stars, send it to: **ASK THE STARS, INSIDE WRESTLING, Box 58, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571**



EDDIE GRAHAM

"I have stayed in wrestling this long because it is a constant challenge. There are always new frontiers to explore, new things to learn, new grounds to break. The sport has never been boring, so I still like it."



RAY STEVENS

"I really don't think I can answer that question. I mean, there is no one reason I'm still a wrestler. I like to wrestle. I like to win. I like the money I get. I like to please the fans. Isn't that enough?"

The "Question of the Month" is:

"What would you say is the one thing that has kept you going for years?"

**Submitted by:
Kim McClelland;
Winnipeg,
Manitoba, Canada**



GORILLA MONSOON

"Wrestling is the best thing that ever happened to me. Ever. I cannot discount there have been financial pleasures derived from the sport, but the main reason I stay is simply because it has been good to me."



BRUISER

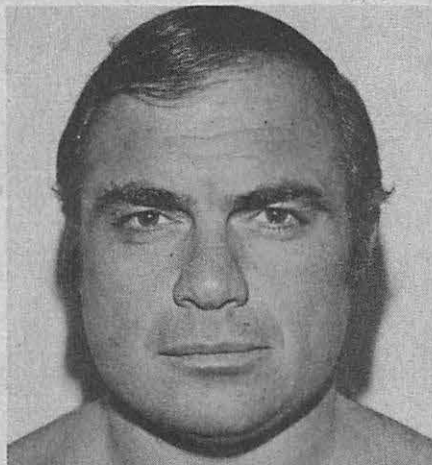
"There is no one single reason why I'm still wrestling after all these years. The most important thing to me now is the love of the fans. I think that is the one thing which has kept me going these past few years."

RS ANSWER OF THE MONTH



HARLEY RACE

"When I first started my career, there were a few things I wanted to accomplish. The most important thing I wanted to do was become the longest reigning champion in history. I still have a few years to go."



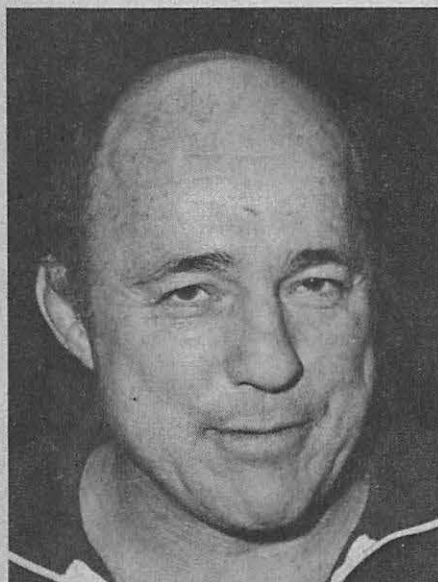
JOHN TOLOS

"I am in this strictly for the money. If I wasn't making a fabulous fortune from wrestling, I would do something else. Is there any other reason needed? Money is the name of the game everybody plays."



BOBO BRAZIL

"What else can I do? I have always been a wrestler, and I will continue to be one until the day I am forced to retire. It's in my blood, and I can never get it out. I am a wrestler. I want to do nothing else."



VERNE GAGNE

"There is only one reason I have stayed in wrestling all these years: I love the sport. It is my whole life, and I couldn't conceive of going without it. It would be like a day without sunshine."



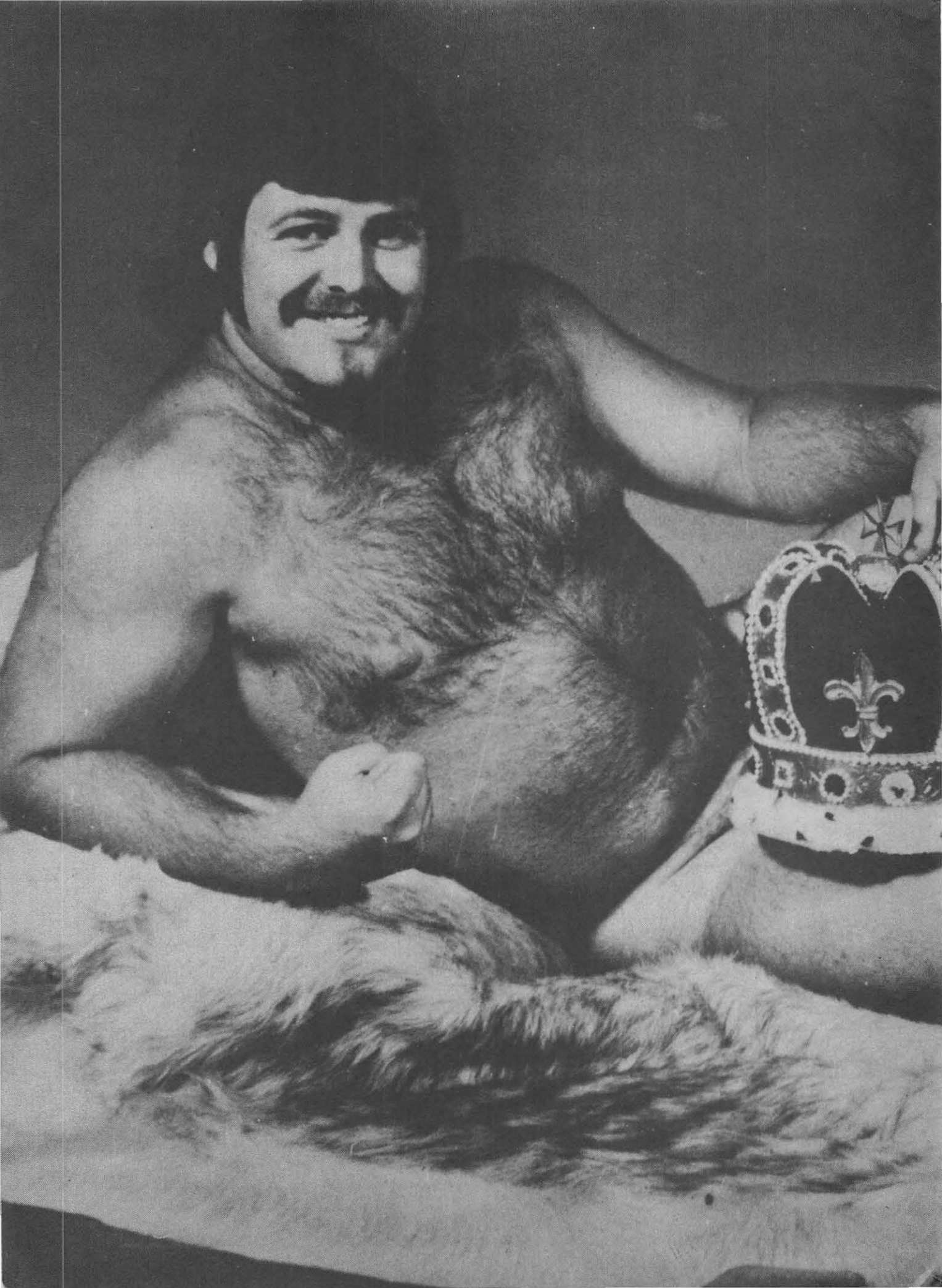
DON LEO JONATHAN

"Very early in my life, my father, Brother Jonathan, instilled a deep respect and admiration for wrestling. When he retired, I tried to continue the tradition he started. It's a matter of pride."

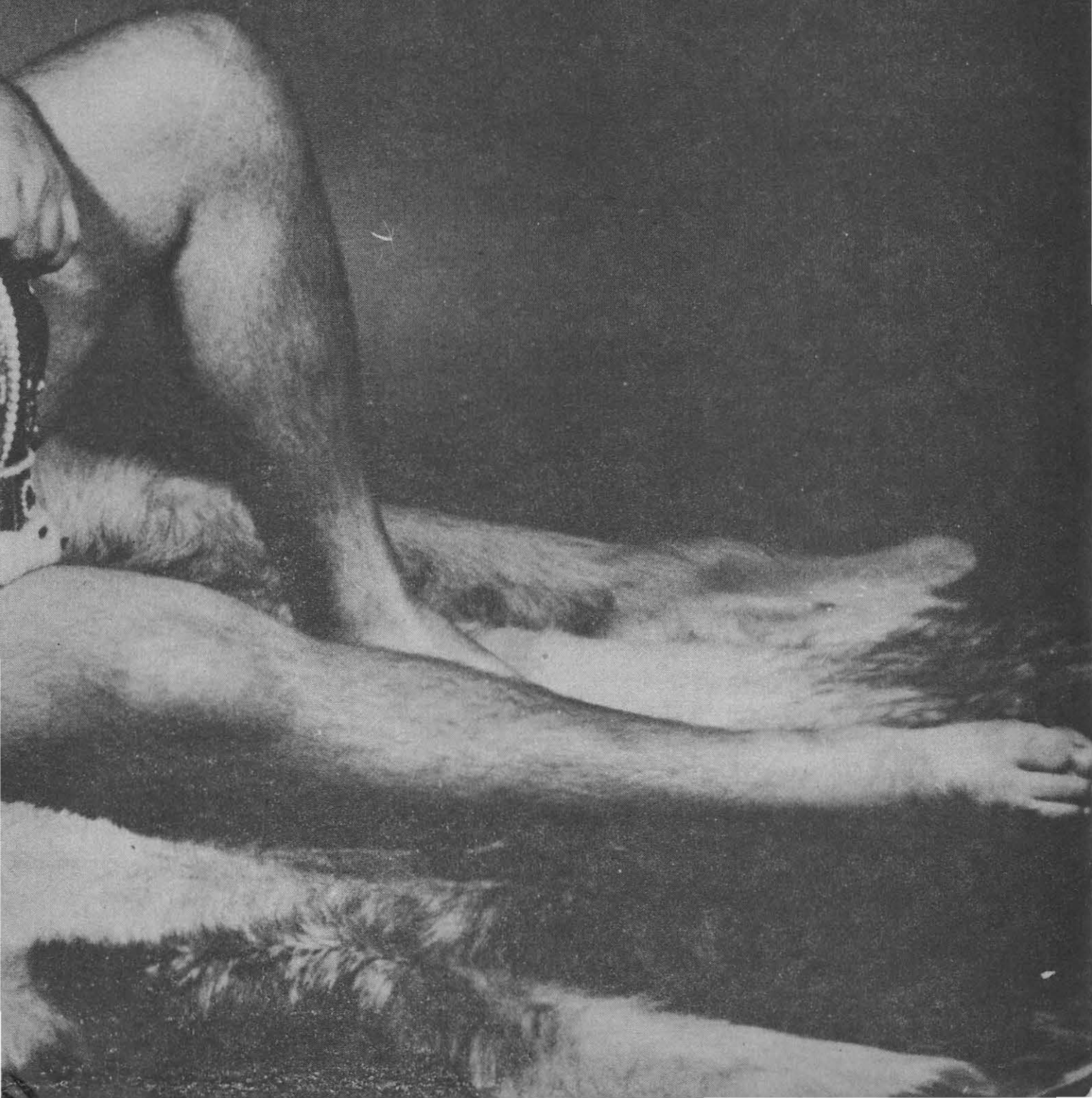


IVAN KOLOFF

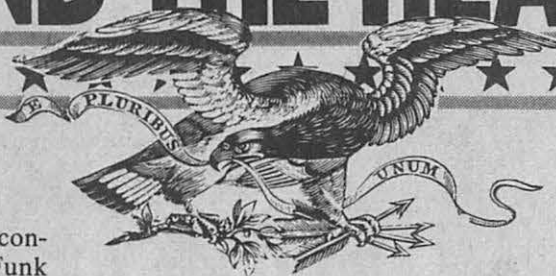
"There is nothing holding me to wrestling. I could leave tomorrow if I really wanted to. But for now, it strikes my fancy, and I don't plan to leave. Let others go. I have important things still to be done." □



JERRY LAWLER



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ THE STORY ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ BEHIND THE HEADLINE ★



LOOKING BACK AT this confrontation between Dory Funk Jr. and Jack Brisco, one realizes it was a battle between two of the greatest wrestlers in the sport. Even though Brisco was still a few years away from winning the NWA belt, he exhibited all the qualities which would later make him a champion.

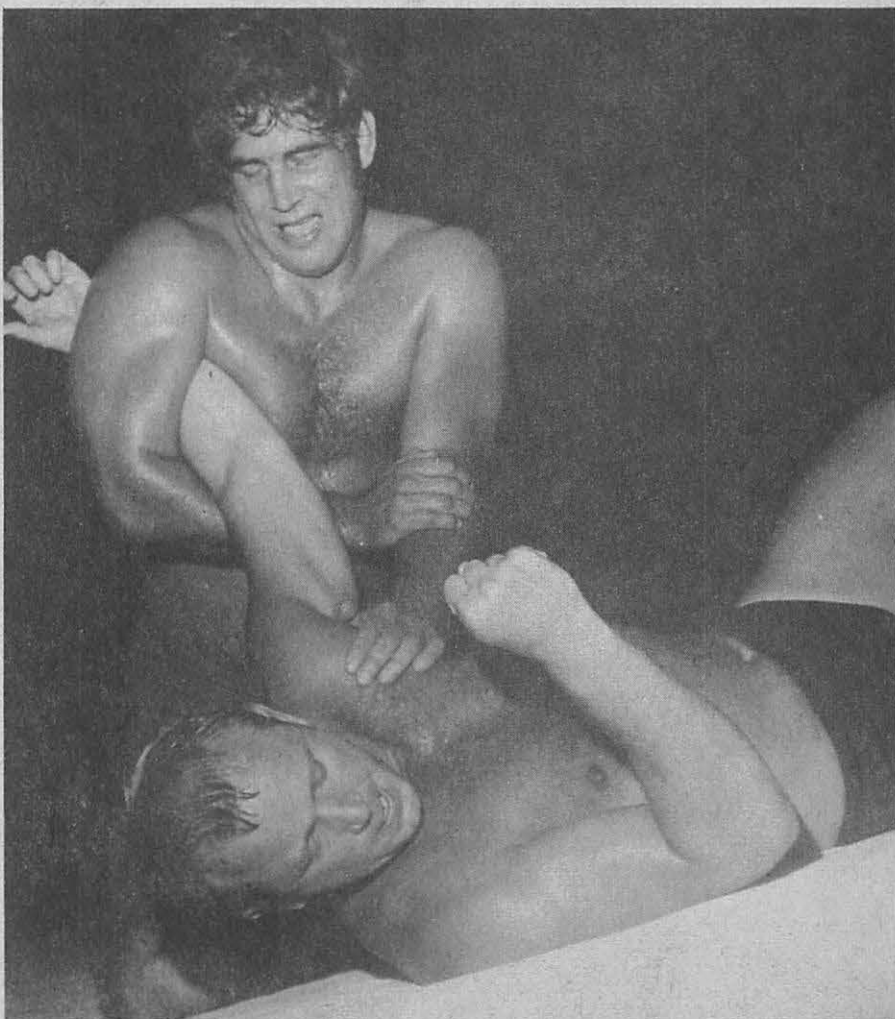
This May 1971 confrontation brought out the best in both men. Funk, who then held the title, was fiercely determined not to let it slip away. Brisco was equally determined to win the belt. And he almost won it on this particular Spring night.

In this two out of three fall match, only one fall was captured by either man. At 19:15, Funk captured the fall when he and Jack collided while attempting flying tackles. Jack stumbled and fell to the canvas and then Dory fell on top of him.

After that setback, Brisco found new inspiration to keep going. He clearly dominated Funk, using some of his most brilliant maneuvers. It was difficult for Dory to continue. Only the thought of losing the belt kept Funk from submitting.

With only a half minute to go before the final bell, Brisco launched his final assault, tying Dory up with a figure four grapevine. This looked like it just might do the trick for Jack. Dory was in great pain, and it did not appear he could continue. There were only seconds remaining. Using all the strength he had left, Funk resisted. He tensed his body up, refusing to allow his shoulders to touch the canvas. Brisco knew Funk could not keep this up for long. He only needed a few more seconds. Then he could win.

But Jack was denied those extra few moments. The bell rang ending the match. Brisco would have to wait until another day and another man to win the NWA belt. □



Funk, Jr.-Brisco Battle Hailed as Classic Bout

St. Louis wrestling fans are still buzzing about the fantastic fracas at The Arena on Nov. 19 between World Heavyweight Champion Dory Funk, Jr. and Jack Brisco.

Ray Gillespie, astute sportswriter who has been covering wrestling for some forty years, led the match

lided while trying flying tackles. Brisco fell to the mat, while the champion stumbled into the ropes and then collapsed on top of Brisco for the verdict.

Brisco enjoyed a solid advantage in much of the remaining 38:45 but was unable to hold Funk's shoulders to the mat. Jack finally was able to clamp on the figure four grapevine—but only 35 seconds were left before the final bell and Funk managed

TOP SECRET

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by Randy
Gordon



"TOGETHER, WE'LL TAKE over the entire sport!" Those words were part of a statement recently issued by Lou Albano and signed by his protege, Ken Patera. I'm sure not even Albano actually believes that.

Personally, I don't think Albano and Patera are getting along too well. Walking down the hall in Madison Square Garden the other day, I came to a dressing room that had a sign in big letters on the closed door that read, "CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO AND KEN PATERA—KEEP OUT!" I was about to invite myself in, when all of a sudden I heard shouts coming from inside the dressing room. Their words were quite audible, and anybody walking by at that moment would have heard exactly what I heard.

"You're gonna' be my ruination, Albano!" shouted Patera. "Just remember—I'm my own man, and do what I want. I can rip our contract in half just as easy as I can rip a phone book in half. And if you don't think I can do it, you just keep it up."

"You big dummy," yelled Albano. "It was me who made you the great wrestler you are. With me you'll be a great world champion. Without me you're nothin'!"

Just then, Dan Shocket came down the hall. When he saw me easedropping on Patera and Albano, he quickly pushed open the door to their dressing room.

"Quit yelling guys, Gordon's outside," shouted Dan at the quarreling duo. Suddenly, Albano and Patera acted as if nothing had happened between them.

"My man here, Ken Patera, is
(Continued on page 53)

AN OPEN LETTER TO SUPERSTAR GRAHAM



Dear Billy:

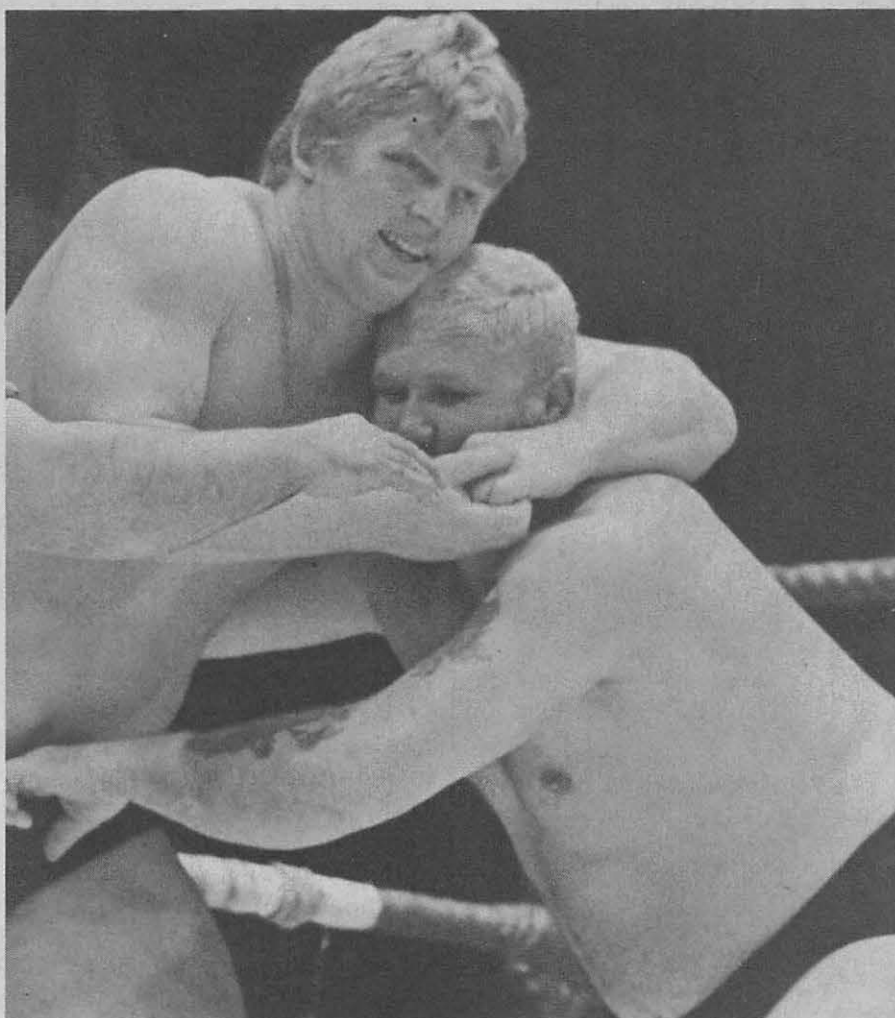
Congratulations! You're WWWF champion. No longer can you be dismissed as the prancing egomaniac with a garish wardrobe. You're now one of the three most important wrestlers in the world. As you go, so goes the sport.

We respect the right of every champion to make his decisions and handle the title in any way he sees fit. The following is simply a suggestion. There are 10 men who deserve a shot at the title. We respectfully ask you to consider them as future contenders.

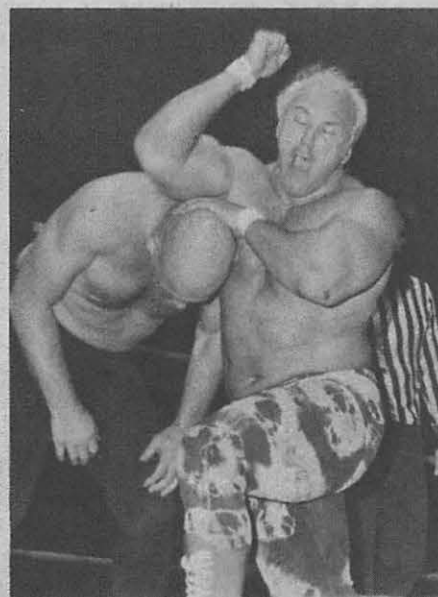
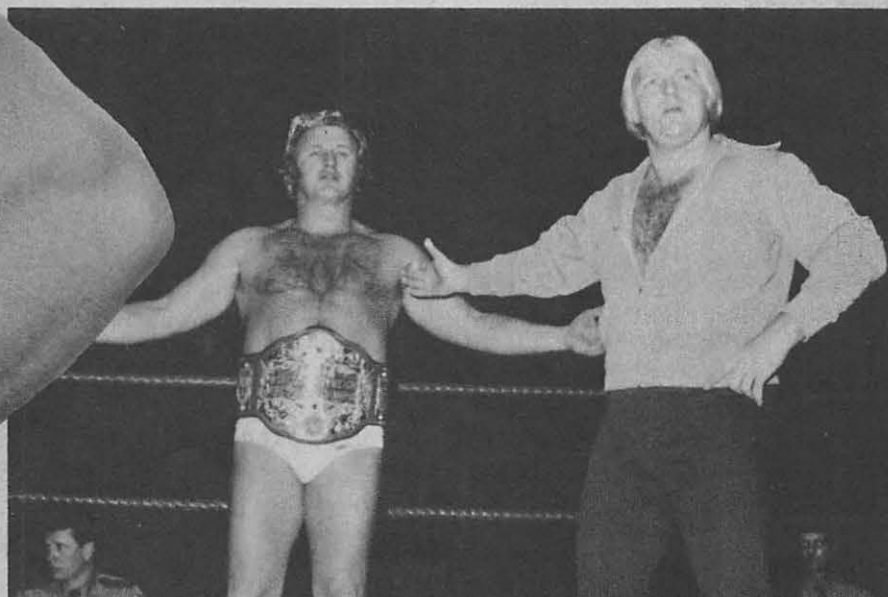
First, you must give ex-champion **Bruno Sammartino** a chance to regain his title. Due to the controversy surrounding your title victory, it's imperative Sammartino be satisfied he has been given every chance. The fans will demand it, rightfully so. Your title cannot be honored unless Sammartino has his chance to own it once again.

Next, consider the many men who have struggled in vain for a title shot. The man fans would love to see battle for the belt is **Ivan Putski**. Defeating him and Sammartino would prove your boast of being the strongest man in wrestling; nobody in wrestling can claim victories over both men. For whatever reasons, Putski never faced Sammartino. It

(Continued on page 64)



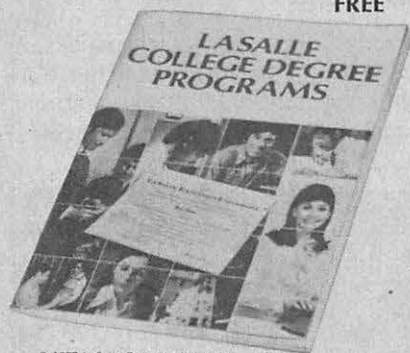
Above: Will young Bob Backlund, who has already been hailed as championship material, be the man who can defeat Superstar Graham? The two men must meet in combat soon. Below left: AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel could be a very serious challenge to Billy's future. Below right: Baron Von Raschke could be a lot of trouble if he decided to challenge Graham for the belt.



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HIRED TO DESTROY MIL MASCARAS

(Continued from Page 27)



significant to note that Professor Tanaka was sent to do the job. Could he have been sent by a fellow countryman, or at least someone based in Japan? It seems logical. But which wrestler could have sent Tanaka?

Mil has had many classic battles in Japan. He is well-loved by millions of wrestling fans in that country, much to the dismay of several native grapplers. One in particular has been known to dislike Mascaras intently. Though he is not a native of Japan, he has adopted it as his home. That man is The Destroyer. And The Destroyer defends the honor of Japan as if it were his own country. He very well could have been the man who sent Tanaka to destroy Mascaras. However, that is only speculation and cannot be verified. It would be unfair to say The Destroyer definitely sent Tanaka to destroy Mil. It cannot be proved.

Nonetheless, Professor Tanaka had been hired for a vicious mission, and he set out to accomplish it. Many people became very curious as to how he was going to go about destroying Mascaras. Even Mil was interested. Thousands flocked to the arena to see what had to be a very intense battle.

As the match began, it looked like Tanaka might just accomplish his goal. He was a ferocious battler,

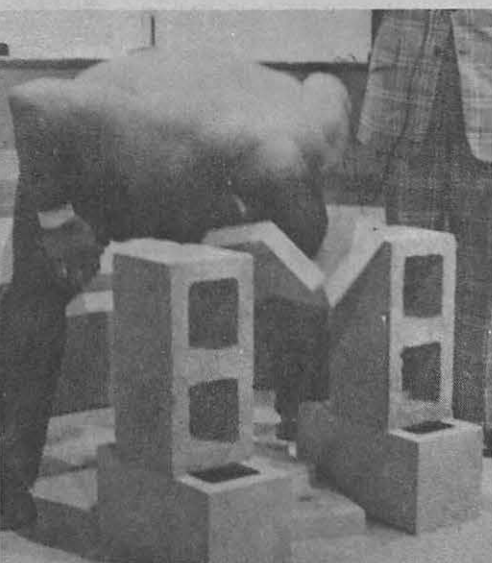
Professor Tanaka tries to counter a move by Mil (above), but he will be unable to do so. Why was Tanaka sent to destroy a man so many millions love?



Professor Tanaka tries unsuccessfully to remove Mil's mask (above) during one of the most furious moments of the match.

ignoring the rulebook, and heading straight for the kill. He wanted to do what he had been sent to do and go home. But Mascaras was not going to make it easy for the professor.

For 20 minutes, the two men battled intensely, with neither able to gain control. But Tanaka had



During some pre-match publicity, Tanaka demonstrates some of the martial arts tactics he has perfected.

made a major tactical mistake, and Mil had been smart enough to strategically capitalize on the error. By coming on strong in the first few minutes of the match, Professor Tanaka had worn himself out quickly. Mil had taken it easy, doing just enough to counter Tanaka's moves. Now, after 20 minutes of battle, Mascaras made his move. While Professor Tanaka tried to apply a nervehold on Mil, the Mexican grappler escaped and put a nervehold on Tanaka. The Japanese wrestler had not expected this. But he was getting more and more tired, and it was difficult for him to escape.

It was now just a matter of minutes. One perfectly executed flying bodypress ended the match. Tanaka had failed to do what he had been hired to do. He ran swiftly out of the arena and back to his dressing room. He had been humiliated, and he would have to report back to the person who hired him that he had failed. Mascaras had not been destroyed; indeed, Mil had done an excellent job.

Whoever it was who hired Professor Tanaka in the first place will probably try again. He may use a different wrestler to accomplish his goal. Or maybe he will come out of hiding and try to do the job himself. Whoever the mystery man is, Mascaras will be ready for him.

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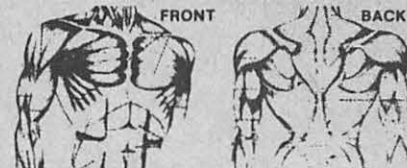
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TERRY FUNK'S LONG ROAD BACK TO GLORY

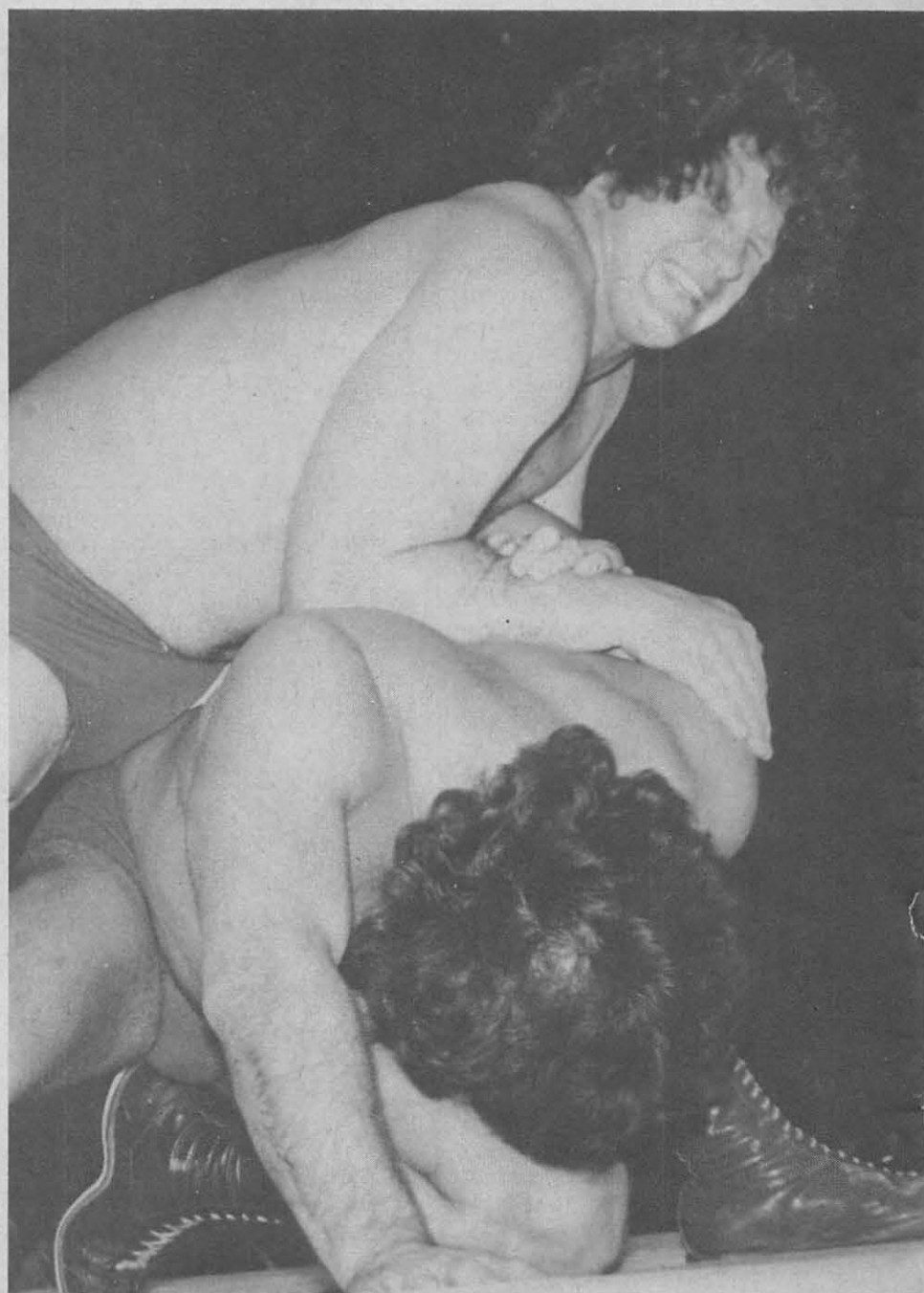
(Continued from Page 30)

Funk were back where they had started from many years before.

A title no longer loomed overhead. No championship would be decided in the aftermath of this match. The NWA belt, which both men had once possessed, was not up for grabs on this night. Yet both

men were apprehensive about the outcome of the upcoming battle. It meant a lot to each.

Immediately after he lost the belt to Harley Race, Terry Funk went into seclusion for several weeks. No one heard from him. There were many rumors regarding Funk's



Terry Funk appears to have Jack Brisco in trouble, but this situation will not last for long. A few moments later, Jack will free himself and have Funk in a similar predicament!

whereabouts, but none of them were verified.

As the weeks passed without hearing from the wrestler, people began to wonder if Terry would ever wrestle again. It was thought he had been permanently injured in his match against Race. Where was he?

That question went unanswered. Indeed, it seems that will never be answered. But Terry Funk is back, and he wants his title. But there is a long, hard road ahead of him.

What could be more appropriate for a comeback than for Terry to battle Jack Brisco, the man from whom Terry won the title originally? It seemed to be the best idea of all. Terry figured a victory over Jack would help him recapture national attention. It would be an instrumental stepping stone to regaining his belt.

But the prospect of wrestling again after being off for so many months scared Terry. A wrestler must always stay in top physical condition, and Funk had not done that. Muscles tend to lose their tone. Maneuvers which were once comfortably perfected become jerky and lack their former grace. Even after long hours of training, Terry was still worried about how well he would do.

Jack Brisco had no reason to worry, except he was scared of the unknown. He was not sure exactly what Funk had been doing in those many months of inactivity. For all he knew, Terry could have perfected some vicious new tactics which could inflict permanent damage. He did not know Terry had not wrestled at all. He assumed Funk had traveled around the country wrestling with a mask over his face. That was the story he had heard, and he believed it.

These two consummate professionals, both former NWA champions, were as scared as two young men making their professional debut. If it wasn't so nerve-racking, it would have been funny. But it wasn't funny, it was very serious business.

It did not take very long for either man to lose his anxiety. Both had

(Continued on page 50)

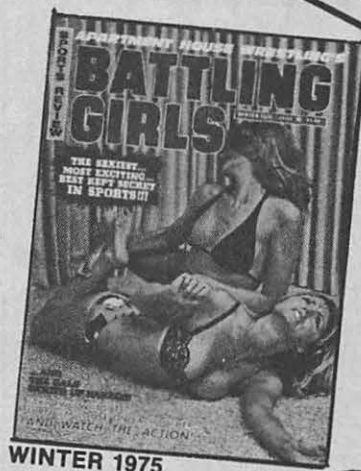
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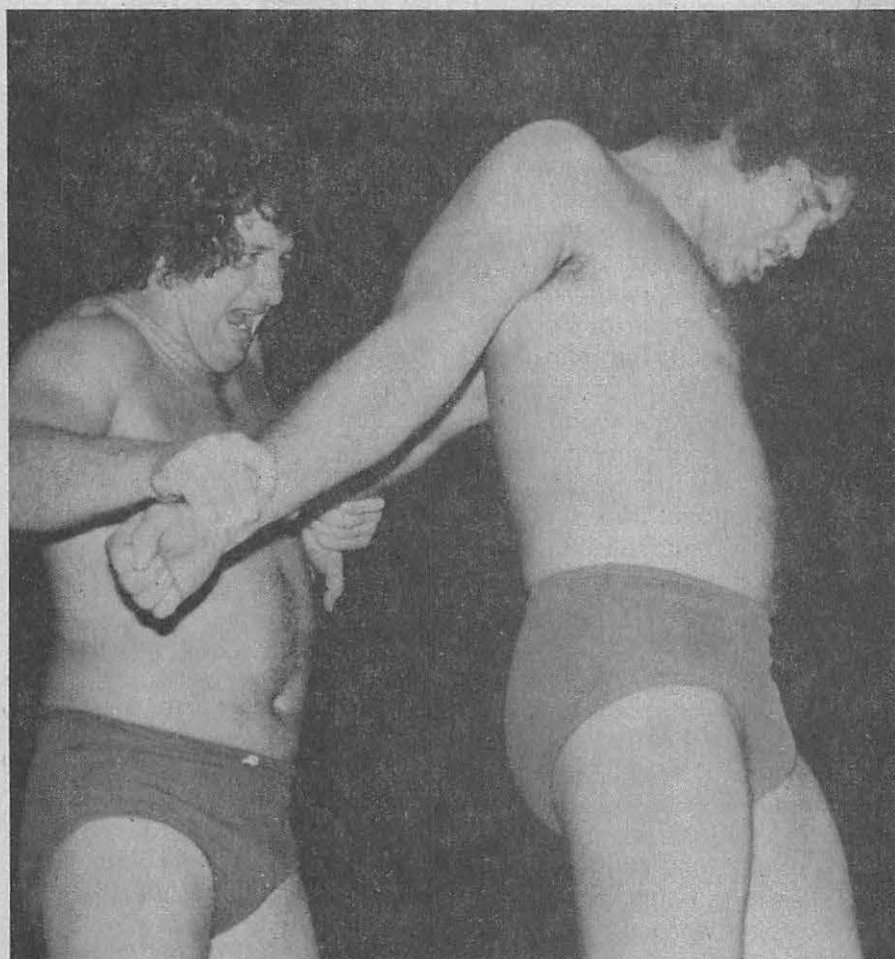
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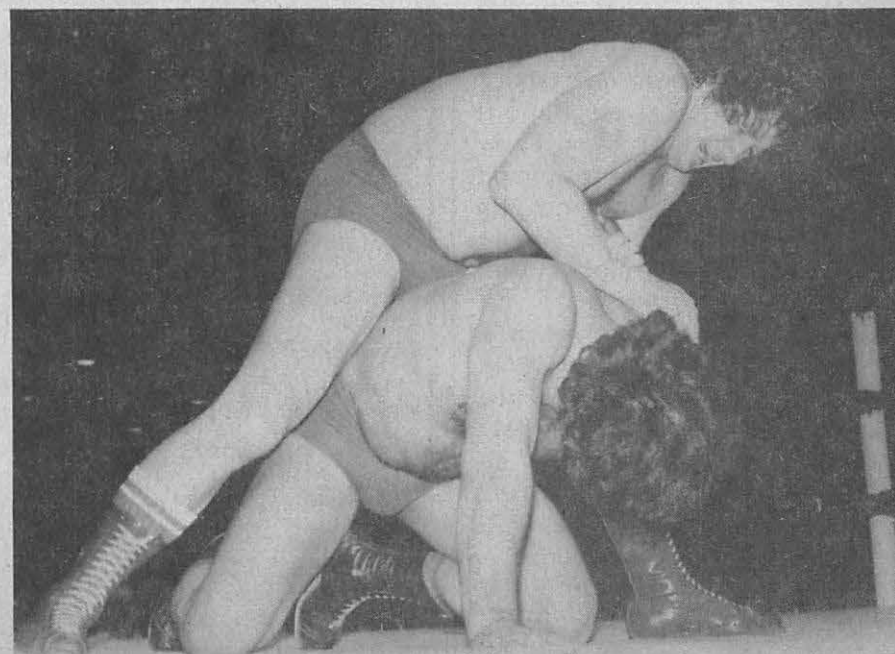
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TERRY FUNK'S LONG ROAD BACK TO GLORY

(Continued from Page 49)



For a while, it appeared Terry would win this match (above and below). But this was not destined to happen; the battle ended in a draw. Terry's comeback trail will now be even longer than it was before.



an overwhelming desire to win, and this need was stronger than any fears they may have had. In very little time, a ferocious battle was taking place. It was more violent than any of their previous encounters.

Terry's strategy was obvious: He wanted to repeat what he had done against Jack Brisco when he won the title. He tried desperately to put Jack in a figure-four leglock. But Brisco knew what was happening. He sensed Funk's desire, and he knew exactly how to counter it.

For close to an hour, these two veteran wrestlers battled with reckless abandon. They both were highly aware of exactly how important this match was—even though no championship was directly at stake—but neither man could clearly gain an advantage. And this fact was frustrating to both of them.

A draw can be interpreted two ways: In most situations, it means both men won in a sense. In this situation, both men lost. When the bell rang signifying the time limit, both men were visibly disappointed. They could not be satisfied with a draw; it wouldn't mean anything. But they both had to live with that result.


For Jack Brisco, a draw was a result to which he could adjust. He had been more worried about what would actually happen during the match than what the outcome would be. But for Terry Funk, a draw was somewhat akin to a disaster. If he was to have a successful comeback, he needed to have a clear-cut victory over Jack Brisco. Soon after the match was completed, he asked for a rematch. He knew deep in his heart, he would have to beat Brisco or forego any hopes of regaining the NWA belt.

For now, the belt is still not out of Terry's grasp. It is just a little further away than he had hoped. But he will keep trying. He is determined to take back what he feels Harley Race stole from him. And with this determined effort, he just may succeed in winning back his championship. □


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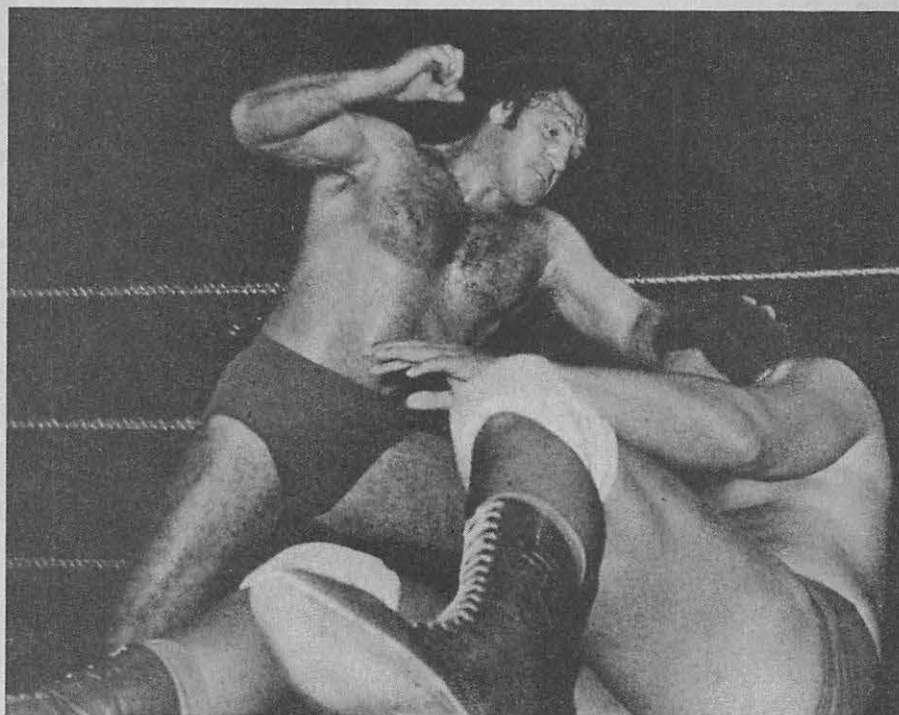
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BODYSLAM & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 8)



Bruno Sammartino (shown above battling Ernie Ladd) lost the WWWF belt in a very controversial match to Superstar Billy Graham. While some people were upset by this result, this columnist applauded it. Now avowed rulebreakers own the championships of all three major associations.

heroes will be Graham, Bockwinkel, and Race. That can only mean the new wrestlers will be tougher than ever before.

This will also mean the end to many popular wrestlers. We can bid farewell to such mediocrities as Ivan Putski, Chief Jay Strongbow, Mr. Wrestling II (and III and IV and V), Bobo Brazil, Dusty Rhodes, and a host of other losers. No one will regret their passing into oblivion, no one except fans too stupid to know better.

This will be wrestling's golden era. I see grapplers, smart enough to know which way the wind blows, able to earn more than \$500,000 a year. New and better wrestlers will come to take the place of those too incompetent to change. Wrestling will attract athletes who formerly thought of going into football, basketball, hockey, baseball, and boxing. It will be the premier athletic event.

The only thing jeopardizing this glorious future is the commissioners and promoters. They might not like it when their lackey fan favorites get beaten all the time.

After all, they don't want independent wrestlers running the sport. The scientific wrestlers are so easily handled.

Therefore, to protect their dictatorships, the commissions may start to crack down hard on the rulebreakers. You'll see referees, never a group infected with integrity, give the popular chumps a decided edge. The current champions may find themselves shackled by official hampering. If any of the three lose their title to a popular mat star, half the belt should go to the referee. He will have done all the work.

Hopefully, the commissioners will be thwarted. The referees did their best to keep the current champions from winning titles and failed. There's no reason the future should be different. The commissioners may consider stripping the current champions of the title, but their substitutes will be kings in name only. Even the officials are smart enough not to want their title in disrepute—sometimes.

Still, this is the best of all times for professional wrestling. □

DOOR

(Continued from Page 43)

the strongest, most agile, and overall best wrestler in the world," said Albano. "He's the future champion of the WWWF."

"Come on Gordon," bellowed Patera. "Take a picture of the Captain, Shocket and myself. You can use it in your column. It'll make it a lot better." the three of them laughed, and I walked out. They may have had a good laugh, but I'm having the last one. No matter what the Captain, Patera or Shocket may say, there is trouble brewing in the Albano-Patera partnership. Something tells me theirs is a partnership that will not last too much longer. I wonder how they'll try to squirm out of this!

Last month, before my colleague Michael B. Kape went "On The Road" to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina to meet with

"Nature Boy" Ric Flair (I call him "Nature's Mistake"), I warned him, "You won't like Flair one bit." But Kape had to find out for himself, and he wrote in his column about Flair, "He had proven uncooperative, petty, insensitive, and obnoxious." I told him so!

Ever since I made things too hot for Stan Hansen and chased him out of the WWWF area, he has been terrorizing wrestlers in NWA territory. Reports have it he has broken a few necks in his short time out there. Looks like I'll have to chase him out of there, too!

If he's not looking at his powerful body in a mirror in the dressing room, Billy "Superbum" Graham sometimes watches films of his greatest victories.

"I could watch myself all day," said Graham in typical fashion.

Recently, he invited me into

his dressing room to, as he put it, "watch the greatest athlete ever put on this Earth." I came prepared. I told Billy I know-how to load the projector, and suggested he change and get ready for his match while I set up the projector and screen. As he changed, I loaded the projector with a film I once took of Graham—getting battered unmercifully by Bruno Sammartino. It was one of the rare times any wrestler ever battered Graham like that.

You should have seen his face as he watched the film. To say the least, he was quite shaken. As a result, he has banned me from ever coming into his dressing room again. Oh well! Looks like "Superbum" will just have to be another wrestler whom I can fool with a disguise. Graham is too busy looking at himself to ever realize it's me in disguise. □

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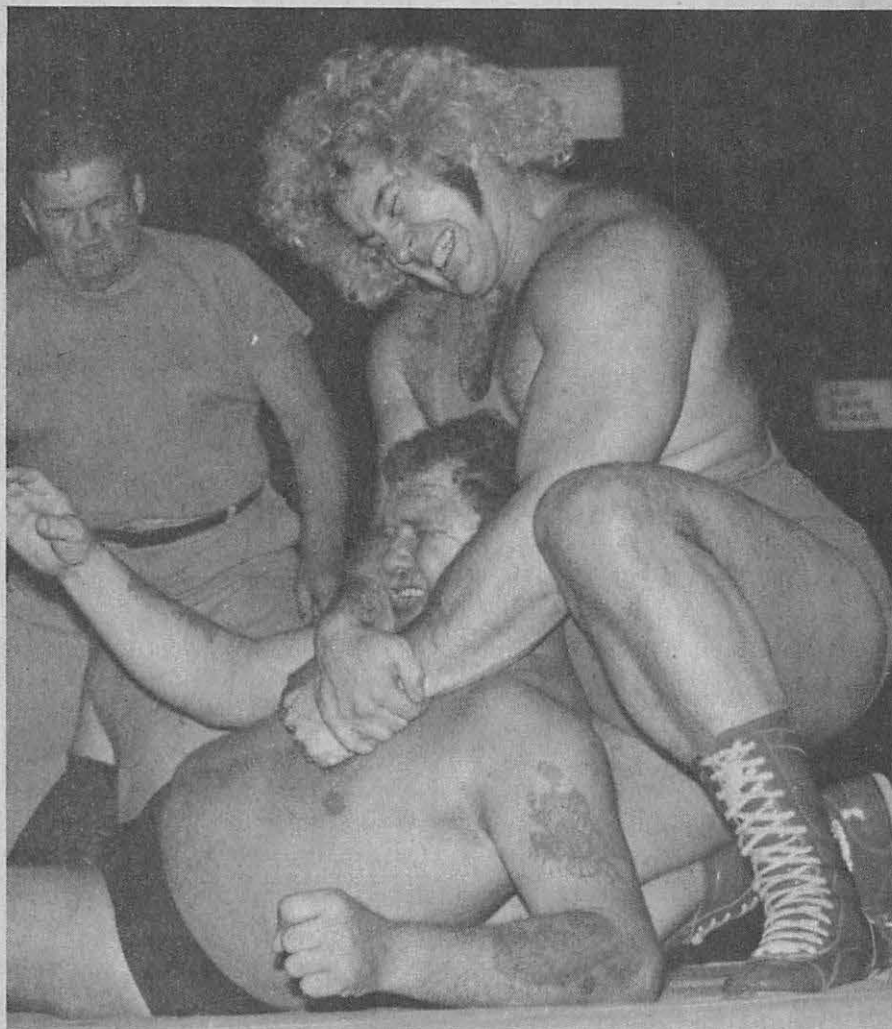
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KEN PATERA — NWA CHAMPION?

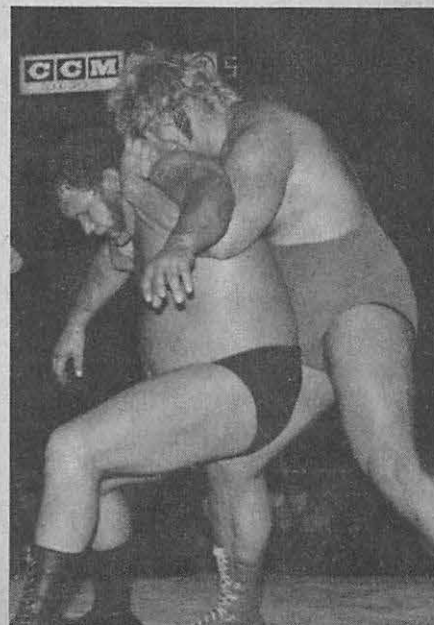
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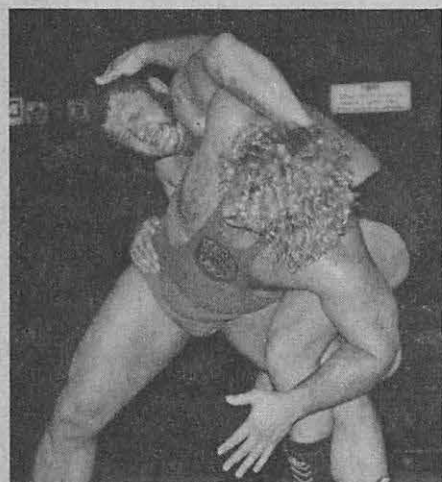


The problems evolving from a championship match between Ken Patera and Harley Race are enormous. First—and probably most important—Ken is now in the WWWF. Harley is NWA champion, and it is his belt on the line. Patera has an exclusive contract with Albano to wrestle in the WWWF. He has no choice to do anything else. Legally, Lou Albano practically owns Ken Patera. And it was through legal dealing that Albano cost Ken the championship of the NWA.

When Ken was offered a chance to wrestle for the NWA title, he jumped at the opportunity. A title—any title—means a lot to Patera. He was determined to win. But he made one major error. He did not tell Albano about the offer. He just went out on his own and signed for the match. He mistakenly thought he could keep it a secret from his manager.

Ken Patera has Race in trouble on the canvas (above) and in the air (below). By all rights, Ken should now be wearing the NWA belt. He should never have tried to deceive his manager, Lou Albano.





Pity Harley Race! Ken has him tangled up no matter what he tries (above). By the end of the match, Harley was worn out by Patera's furious attacks (below).



But nothing stays a secret from Lou Albano, especially when one of his wrestlers is involved. Hours after Patera had signed the contract for the match, Lou knew every clause, paragraph, and stipulation in the document. He was furious. He had other plans for Patera, none of which included the championship of the NWA. If Ken won the title, Lou would lose all rights to manage the wrestler. This did not please Albano in the least.

Albano decided to make a small trip to the commissioners of the NWA. As politely as he could (which is no easy effort for a crude fellow like Albano), he explained to them

(Continued on page 56)

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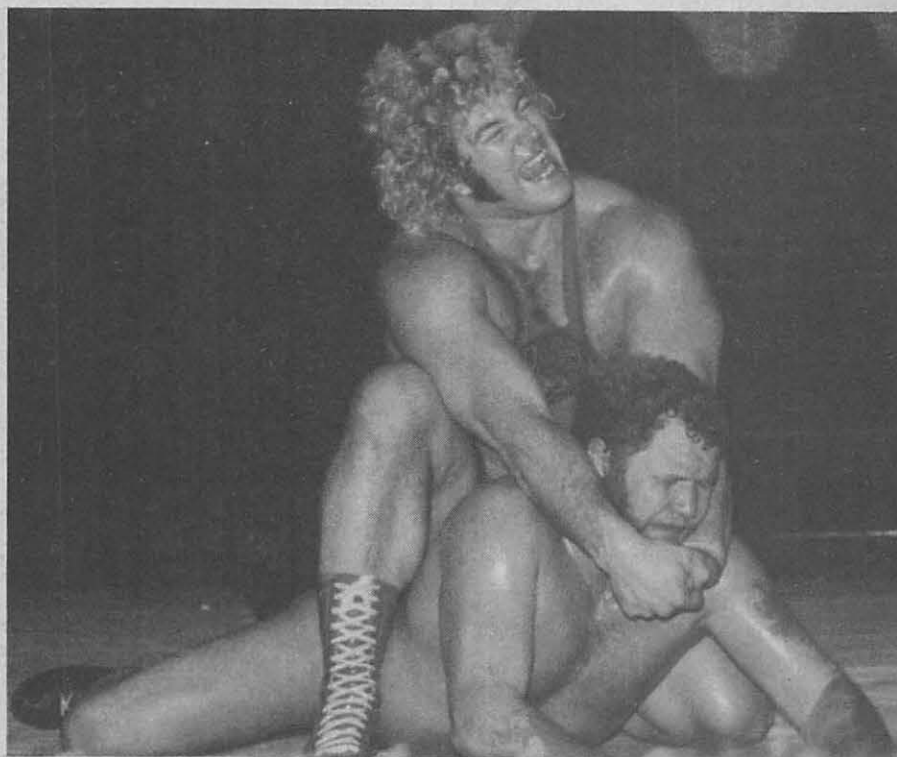
KEN PATERA — NWA CHAMPION?

(Continued from Page 55)

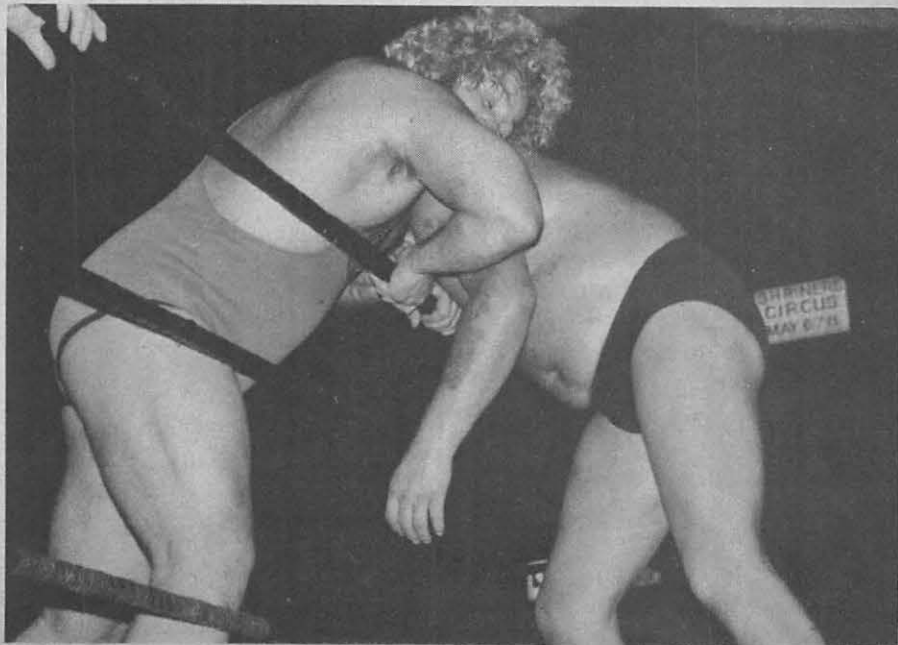
they could not allow Ken Patera to be champion of their association. He had Ken under contract, and he was not about to void that document for anyone. Even if Patera won the belt, he would have to give it up immediately. After several consultations with their own lawyers, the commissioners

agreed. But they forgot to tell Patera what had happened.

In the meantime, Ken went on not knowing what his manager had done. He trained intensely for his match against Race. He was determined to win. And he fully expected to walk away from the match with the belt. He was sorely



Above: Victory is within Patera's reach, and from the expression on his face, it is obvious he knows it. Harley appears to be worried about his future. Below: A battered and beaten Harley Race continues to absorb Patera's fury, even though he is outside the ropes!



disappointed.

Several unexpected things happened in the match between Patera and Race. For the first time in a long time, the spectators were cheering for Ken. And he rather liked it. It had been a long time. Ever since he had changed his style, fans had booed him continually. This time, however, it was Race, not Patera, they wanted to see go down to defeat. They had their wish. Patera's strength was too much for Race to overcome. A bearhug did in Harley Race.

At the end of the match, everyone thought Patera was the new AWA champion. Suddenly, Lou Albano appeared out of nowhere. He gingerly stepped into the ring, trying to avoid Patera. He announced to all present that Ken could not take the belt. He had seen to that. Moments later, an NWA official also entered the ring and confirmed what Albano said. Patera was furious. The belt should have been his. Now he was being denied the honor on legal technicalities. He stormed out of the ring and back to his dressing room. Albano tried to follow, but he decided it would be better to wait until Ken had a chance to cool down.

However, Patera was still furious. He refused to speak at all to his manager for two weeks. A third party had to negotiate a truce between the two men to get them even speaking again. Rumors have been flying around that Ken is looking for someone else to manage him. He wants out of his contract with Lou Albano. But those close to both men say eventually Ken will relent and make up with his manager. After all, Albano can make Ken a lot of money, and money talks.

Albano cost Patera a championship, and that is very hard to forgive. But even more important than that, Ken still remembers how the fans cheered him the night he wrestled Harley Race. He may want to hear those cheers again. But if he stays with Albano, that will be impossible.

No matter what happens, there is going to be friction between Lou Albano and Ken Patera. This trouble could be very costly to both men.

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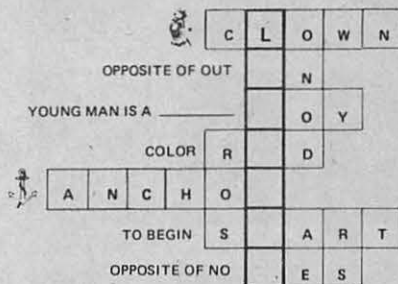
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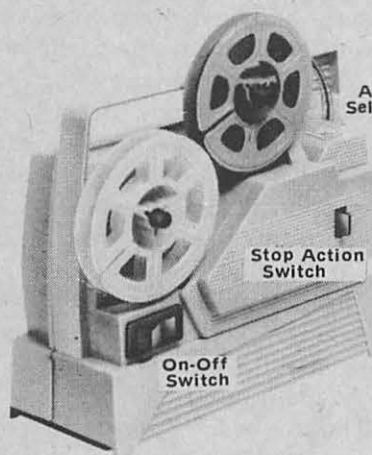
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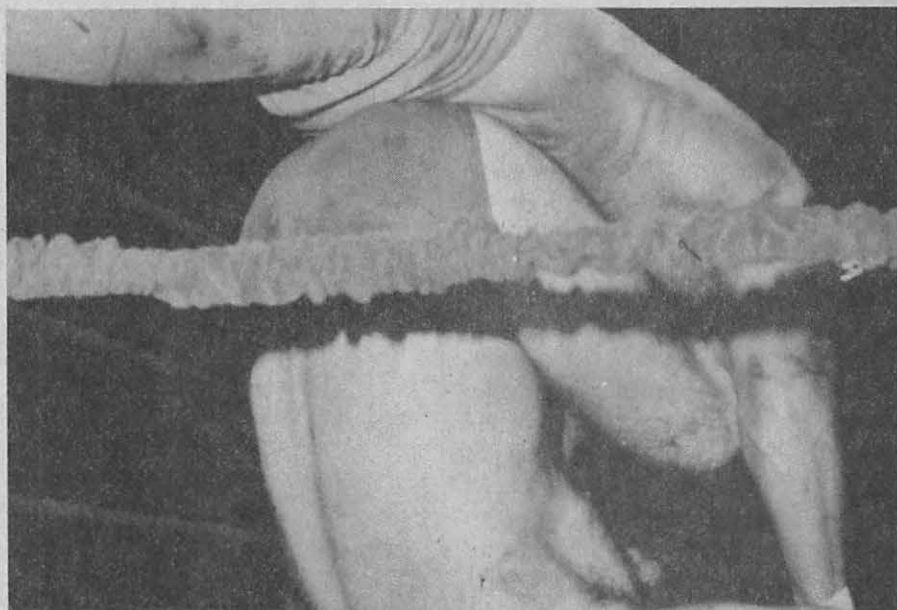
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"NEXT TIME I WRESTLE GRAHAM I'LL KILL HIM!!!"

(Continued from Page 37)



WWWF depends on it."

First, there was silence. Then, one reporter began to applaud. Another joined. The clapping built until every reporter was on his feet, applauding with almost religious fervor. They knew the man who stood before them wasn't destroyed by fate or Superstar Billy Graham. The ovation was for a legend untarnished by defeat or setback. It was offered as a tribute to the man.

When the ovation subsided, there came the questions. Some were tough, some were almost rude. Sammartino handled them all like a professional. He knew they were borne from the fans' right to know, so no question was too tough.

"Before you lost the title," someone asked, "there was some talk about retiring. What about those plans now?"

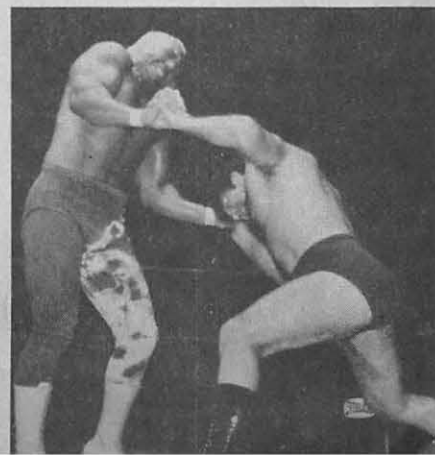
Bruno was quiet before answering. This was obviously the one question he didn't want to hear.

"I don't know what the future holds," Sammartino admitted, "I didn't plan on losing the title, especially to Graham. I think if I'd been defeated fairly, the wrestling boots would have been hung on the wall for good. I could use the vacation and time to attend to my other business interests. But I can't leave while a cloud hangs over the

Above: Graham's legs are obviously on the ropes when he pins Bruno to win the WWWF title, making the pin and victory illegal. Below: Graham squeals in pain as Sammartino puts his victim in an armlock.



Sammartino's knees buckle as Graham gains the advantage in a test of strength (below). This took place early in the match.





Graham falls outside the ring late in the battle. His head was gushing blood from cuts on his forehead.

sport. I won't retire until Billy Graham has been defeated."

"What if someone besides yourself beats Graham?"

"As long as Graham is beaten fairly and with dignity, I don't care who owns the belt. If one of my friends wins the title before I do, that's wonderful. The main concern is not my success but the fate of the WWWF title. I could retire happily knowing the title was in good hands, say if it was owned by Ivan Putski or Chief Jay Strongbow."

"What if someone you didn't respect won the title, like Ivan Koloff or George Steele?"

"First, I respect these men, at least as dangerous opponents. However, I don't feel they have the dignity to own the WWWF title. I hope not to retire until the belt is in good hands. But I've learned enough not to try to predict the future."

There were other questions and other answers. But the real questions, the ones hanging over the assemblage like a cloud, couldn't be answered by anyone in the room. Will Bruno Sammartino be able to take back his title? Will Superstar Billy Graham force him into retirement? Will the legend of Bruno Sammartino be destroyed by one failure in the peak of his great career?

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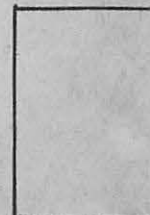
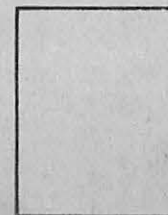
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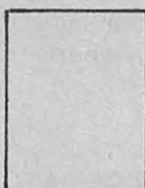
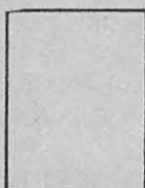
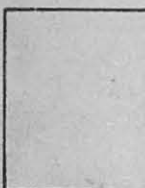
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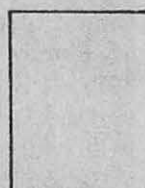
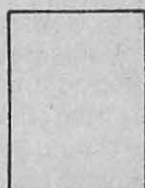
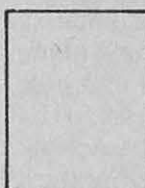
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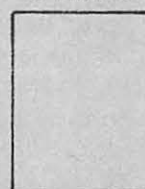
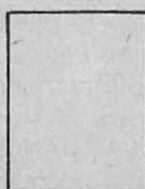
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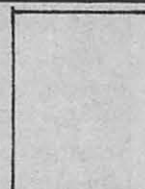
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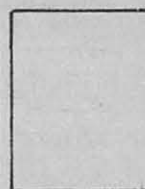
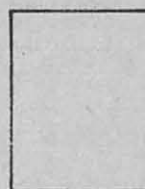
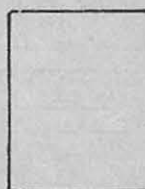
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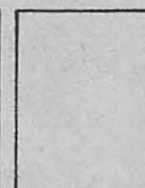
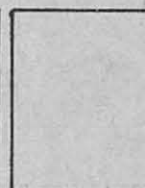
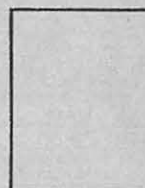
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from Page 18)

OUTRAGEOUS!

What is happening to this world? Has everything gone crazy? When I read, "Bobby Heenan's Outrageous Claim: 'Meet the Newest Member of My Family ... Verne Gagne!'" (June 1977), I wanted to crawl in a hole and die. I pray it isn't true. It can't be true. I couldn't stand it if it was true.

Bobby Heenan's claim must be a boldfaced lie. Verne Gagne stands for everything that wicked manager hates. Why would he ever want to join forces with Heenan? The idea is sickening.

Verne Gagne should sue Bobby Heenan for slandering his good name and reputation. But if there is any truth to Heenan's claim, I will never be able to cheer for Verne Gagne again. Let us hope this whole thing is just another lie by Bobby Heenan.

BIANCA ROGERS
Bismark, N.D.

THANK GOODNESS

When I read Andre the Giant's answer to the fans, "Reach Out and I'll Be There" (June 1977), I breathed a sigh of relief. Like many other people, I was truly worried Andre might actually leave wrestling forever, and that I couldn't tolerate.

Thank goodness Andre listened to reason and decided to stay in this sport. I think I speak for all of his fans when I say we need him. He has done more for wrestling than many men, and he can still do a lot of good for many years to come. It would have been a rash and foolish decision if he chose to leave. We would all be stranded without a hero to whom we could look toward for guidance.

ELIZABETH WHITTEN
Pensacola, Fla.

BRISCO'S THE BEST

"Jack Brisco's Secret Weapon Will Make Him Champion Again" (June 1977) was a very interesting

article. Yet I knew everything in it before it was printed in black and white.

I have been a Jack Brisco fan since the first time I saw him wrestle, which was before he won the NWA belt. I knew then he would be a champion someday. Since that time, I have followed his career closely. He did go into a terrible slump after he lost the NWA belt to Terry Funk, but he has come back. He has renewed confidence now, and that will make him champion again. Your article was 100% correct. Your assessment of Brisco's future was right on target. It's articles like this one that make your magazine the best covering the sport.

LANNY QUINTEN
Galveston, Tex.

ABOUT MR. SHOCKET

This time Mr. Daniel Shocket has gone too far! In the June 1977 "Bodyslams & Pinfalls," he puts down three young men who represent the future of this sport. And he really didn't have to. There is no reason to degrade Bob Backlund, Larry Zbyszko, or Greg Gagne. What have they ever done to him?

Mr. Shocket has said some rather outrageous things in the past, but I could tolerate those. But when he says these three young men should find another profession, he goes too far. These young men are all excellent wrestlers. Unlike many of the seasoned veterans in the sport, they have not had to resort to breaking rules occasionally to win matches. They have won their battles strictly by their abilities. Mr. Shocket has no cause to complain about them.

I think it is time for the top editors of your magazine to take a long, hard look at what Mr. Shocket is writing. Maybe it is time he found another profession!

MARSHALL GOODMAN
Yuma, Ariz. □

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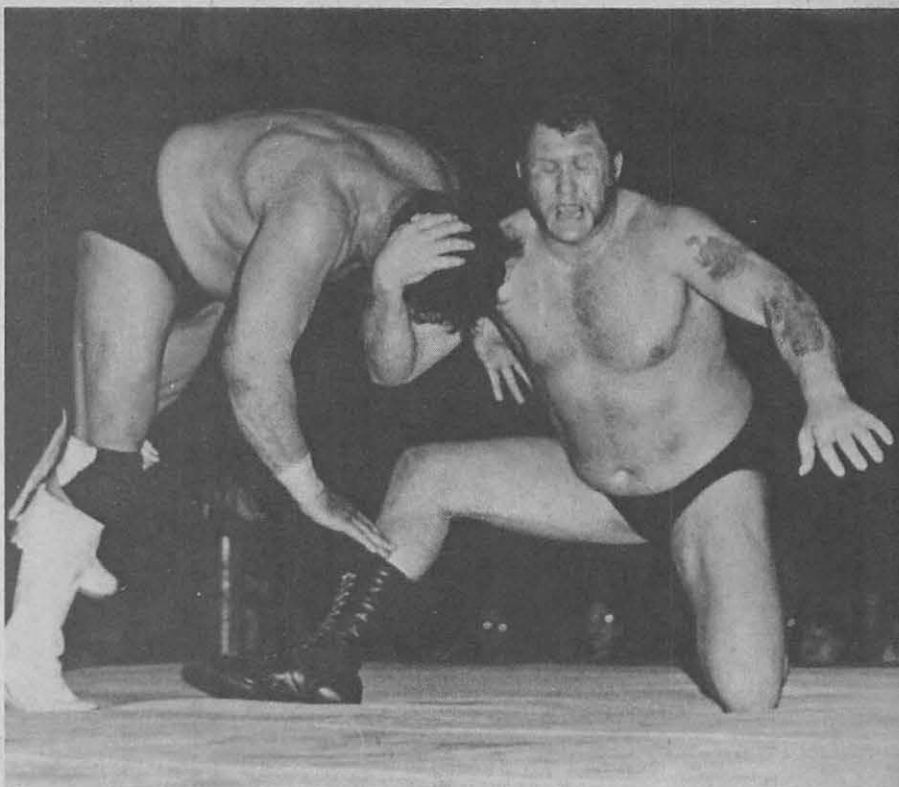


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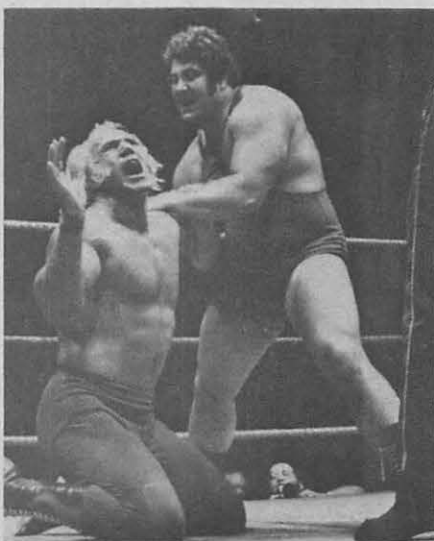
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AN OPEN LETTER

(Continued from Page 45)



Above: Harley Race, NWA champion, is a man Graham should wrestle. Below: Could Ken Patera be the man to take the belt from Superstar?



would look good for you to do what Bruno couldn't.

Another man Sammartino never faced is **Chief Jay Strongbow**. This man has labored long and hard, only to be denied a title shot. There is no conceivable reason why you shouldn't wrestle him. Giving Strongbow the chance he so richly deserves would earn you respect in the eyes of colleagues and fans.

Defeating Strongbow fairly would give your championship the honor it now lacks.

Next, take on a man the fans dislike even more than yourself. The perfect man would be **Baron Von Raschke**. He is renown throughout the world for being a reprehensible rulebreaker and ruthless battler. Turning him back would prove to the world you can defeat men of all types. If anything mars Sammartino's legend, it's his failure to take on scientific wrestlers. You shouldn't make the mistake in the opposite direction.

This would also pit you against Fred Blassie, manager and enemy of all those who love wrestling. No title can flourish without Blassie being made to feel an outsider. Another man who must never enjoy the ear of the king is Lou Albano, manager of wrestling's most despicable warriors. Everything Albano touches becomes ugly. Right now, he's in the process of stripping **Ken Patera** of every last shred of the man's former dignity. Therefore, Patera must fall to you. This could save Patera from being forever in Albano's clutches and turn Lou against the championship.

One man who has never won a title must be given a chance to take yours. **Andre the Giant** should be a future opponent. As long as Andre wanders the land undefeated by you, the fans will never consider you the true champion. Andre must be turned back to still all criticism. The WWWF is the only association Andre has been denied a title shot. It is in your power to rectify this.

Another man who wrestles all over and who must get a title shot is **Mil Mascaras**. The masked grappler is a superb athlete, perhaps the most accomplished scientific grappler of our time. Defeating him will prove your greatness. Avoiding him will cast a shadow over your championship no other victory could dispel. If you want your reign to be considered glorious, Mascaras must be met and turned back.

Another superb athlete who claims title recognition is **Bob Backlund**. He is a young man with a strong following. His fans will never be satisfied until he gets a chance to take your title. If he fails to get his chance, your reign will become known as the era in which Bob Backlund made the champion run scared.

Once these WWWF grapplers are met, then your attention should turn to the AWA and NWA. You know both **Nick Bockwinkel** and **Harley Race** well. It is in your power to challenge AWA champ Bockwinkel and NWA king Race to matches. The winner would be the sole champion of wrestling. The single title is the most necessary thing in wrestling right now. Only a man with your connections could do it. The sport is depending upon you.

The 10 men named for you to face constitute a list that would make even the bravest shudder. They are all tough, accomplished grapplers, men of uncompromising determination and skill. Turning back these 10 is a task of infinite difficulty. Only a champion would attempt it.

You own the WWWF belt. Are you really the champion? Prove it!

Sincerely,
The Editors
INSIDE WRESTLING



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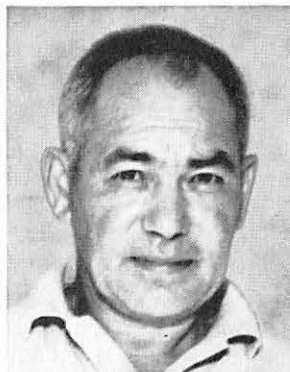


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"I managed to raise enough money with my savings to invest in a combination motel, restaurant, grocery, and service station. It didn't take long to get my eyes opened. In order to keep that business going my wife and I worked from dawn to dusk, 20 hours a day, seven days a week. Putting in all those hours didn't match my idea of independence and it gave me no time for my favorite sport—golf! Finally we both agreed that I should look for something else.

"I found it. Not right away. I investigated a lot of businesses offered as franchises. I felt that I wanted the guidance of an experienced company—wanted to have the benefit of the plans that had brought success to others, plus the benefit of running my own business under an established name that had national recognition.

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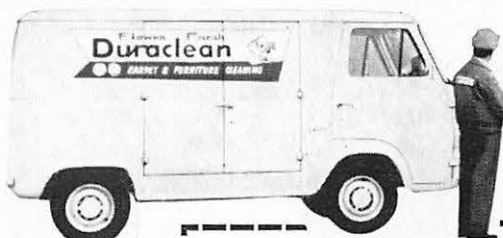
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An ATLAS BODY? In 7 days

my method of DYNAMIC-TENSION starts giving you results you can feel and your friends will notice. Big, useful muscles. Gain pounds in weight where needed.

Lose "pot belly." Take a good honest look at yourself! Are you proud of your body — or are you satisfied to go through life being just "half the man" you could be? No matter how ashamed you are of your present physical condition — or how old or young you are — the "sleeping" muscles already present in your body can turn you into a REAL man! Believe me, I know — because I was once a skinny, scrawny 97-pound half-alive weakling! People used to laugh at my build and make fun of me. I was ashamed to strip for sports or the beach... shy of girls... afraid of healthy competition.

HOW I CHANGED FROM A 97 LB. WEAKLING TO A REAL MAN.

One day, I discovered a secret that changed me from a timid, frightened scarecrow into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man" — a "magic formula" that can help turn you, too, into a marvellous physical specimen... a REAL man from head to toe... a man who STANDS OUT in any crowd! What's my secret? "DYNAMIC-TENSION" — the natural method! No theory. No gadgets or contraptions. You just do as I did. Simply take the "sleeping" muscles already present inside your own body — build them up — use them every day in walking, bending over, reaching, even sitting! Almost before you know it, you're covered with a brand-new suit of beautiful, rock-hard SOLID MUSCLE!

SEND FOR FREE BOOK AND 7 DAY TRIAL OFFER.

So sure am I of how fast "Dynamic-Tension" works that I make this offer to you. Try my course for 7 days and in even that short period of time you will have results that not only you can feel, but your friends will notice, or it costs you nothing. Send for my free book. **WRITE NOW!**
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& SHOULDERS.
- ☐ MORE WEIGHT

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